THE BROOKINGS BUDGET:
ONE SCHULTZ IS LIKE ANOTHER(E)

The Washington Monthly

AUGUST 1972/ONE DOLLAR

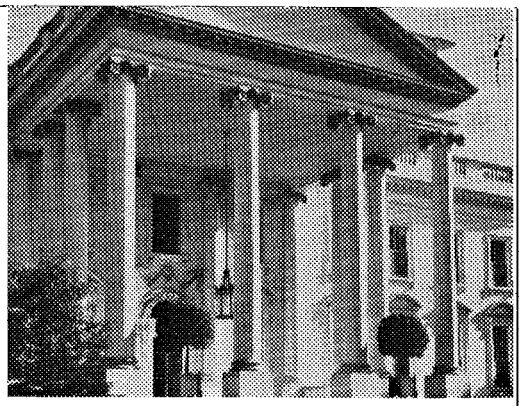
Aborting a Fetus: The Legal Right, The Personal Choice

PRISONERS OF WAR, PRISONERS OF PEACE

Inside a Major Strike: Woodcock's UAW vs. General Motors

AUG 1972

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED



"Should be seriously considered by whoever is the next U.S. president."*

Kissinger secretly visits Peking. Kissinger personally negotiates with the North Vietnamese. Should the President's personal assistant play the leading role in U.S. foreign policy making? Is reliance on the Secretary of State for foreign policy making a reasonable alternative? Would this in fact eliminate some of the potential dangers revealed by the Anderson papers?

"Destler's book is a valuable contribution to the ongoing debate about American foreign policy. The issue confronting this country is not only what should our policy be, but how should it be conducted."—*Zbigniew Brzezinski, Columbia University

"A broad penetrating study of foreign policy decision-making within the executive branch.... It will be much discussed in government and academic circles, and its strengths are such that all subsequent books on the organizational subjects in question will have to deal with Destler's analyses and recommendations."—(starred) *Kirkus Reviews*

$10.00

PRESIDENTS, BUREAUCRATS, AND FOREIGN POLICY

The Politics of Organizational Reform

by I.M. Destler

Princeton University Press

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

SPECIAL INTRODUCTORY SUBSCRIPTION OFFER:
SAVE 50% • MONEY-BACK GUARANTEE

Send me the next eight months of HARPER'S — beginning with the August Solzhenitsyn issue, if available—at the introductory rate, for new subscribers, of $2.84. That's half the regular subscription price. If I'm not satisfied at any time, you'll refund my money on all unmailed issues.

☐ Double my savings. Send 16 months for only $5.68

NAME _____

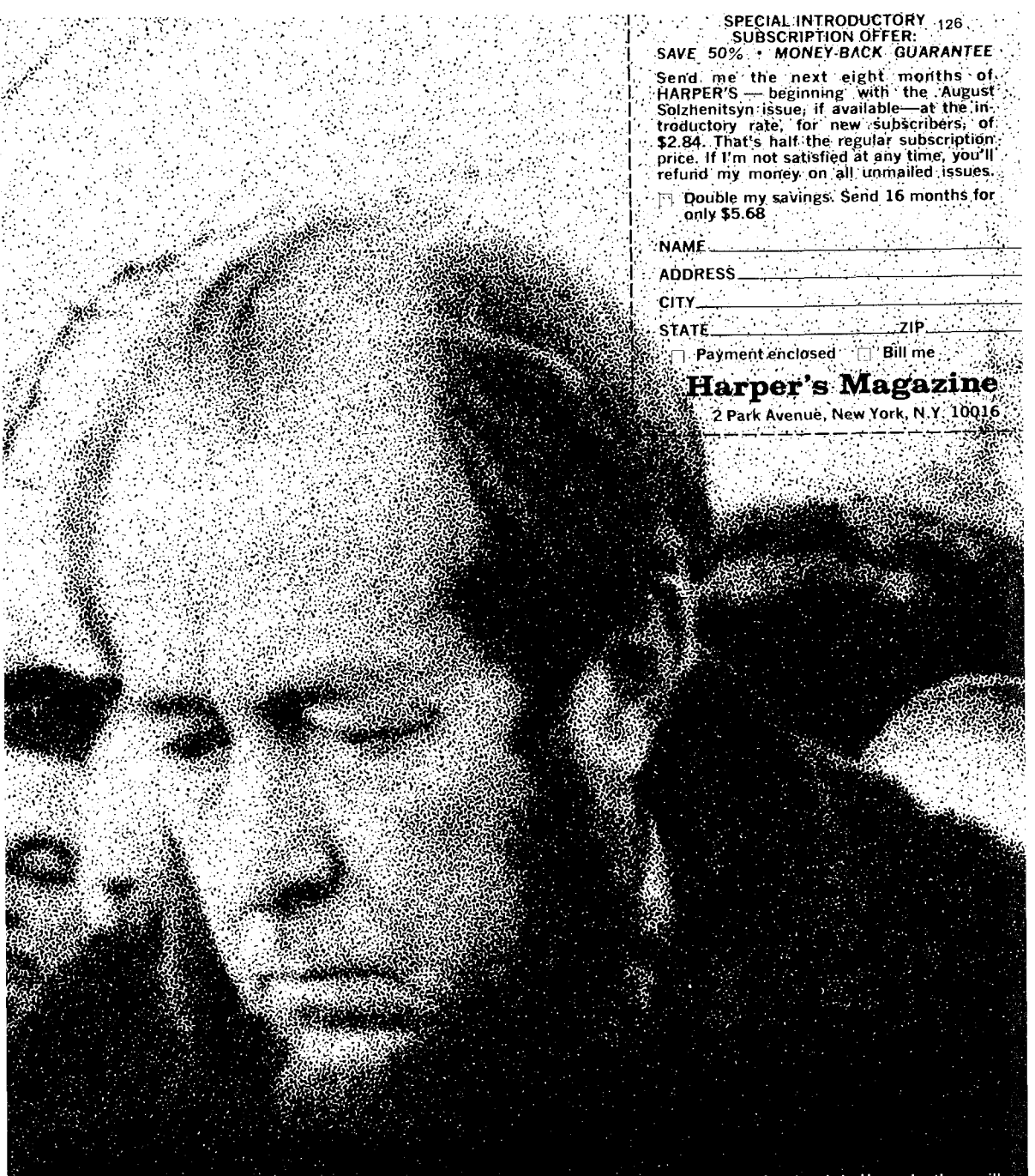
ADDRESS _____

CITY _____

STATE _____ ZIP _____

☐ Payment enclosed ☐ Bill me

Harper's Magazine
2 Park Avenue, New York, N.Y. 10016



SOLZHENITSYN'S "AUGUST 1914" IN HARPER'S AUGUST 1972

Share in a major literary event. Begin your money-saving subscription with the August issue of Harper's Magazine.

This summer, the novel which Alexander Solzhenitsyn calls "the chief artistic design of my life" is being published in America. It is called AUGUST 1914.

We are very proud indeed that Harper's, in its August issue, will bring its readers the climactic final chapters of this superb novel.

Set at the outbreak of World War I, AUGUST 1914 depicts a vast cross-section of characters, fictitious and historic, from every walk of Russian life. The novel provides both a vivid definition of Solzhenitsyn's view of history and a supremely gripping human narrative. The *International Herald Tribune* reported that "it invites comparison with Tolstoy's *War and Peace*."

You will of course want to read this great work of the Nobel laureate. And in the months ahead, in Harper's, there will be a rich selection of other exciting reading fare to enjoy: Germaine Greer on the interplay of sex and power at the Democratic Convention . . . Harper's own correspondent in Bangladesh—an eloquent dispatch from a doomed nation . . . A complete novella by John Barth, author of *Giles Goat Boy* . . . Report from Newark—on the shift from a black to a white minority . . . and much, much more.

All this, and a bargain, too. An introductory subscription of eight months is available for only $2.84—half the regular rate. And you can be assured of satisfaction: If you're ever less than fully pleased with Harper's, say so and we'll refund the full amount on all unmailed issues.

Write today, won't you? We can begin your subscription with the August Solzhenitzyn issue — but only if you act promptly, before our limited supply is exhausted. So, don't delay.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

ROBERT H. McNEAL
Bride of the Revolution
Krupskaya and Lenin

The first major biography of Lenin's wife, and the story of her remarkable marriage to the greatest among European revolutionary leaders. With eight pages of photographs.

"Neither the invisible Krupskaya [of the Stalin era] nor the canonized Krupskaya, of course, is the real one. The real one is in this book."
—Charles Simmons, *New York Times*
$10.00

LYNN EDEN
Crisis in Watertown
The Polarization of an American Community

"The crisis ended but the polarization lesson remains. It was bitter, nasty and nerve-breaking and it happened in an American town as typical as any you could find in the land . . . unpleasant at times . . . but fascinating."
—*Omaha World-Herald* **$6.95**

New Edition, Revised and Enlarged
PERCIVAL SPEAR
India
A Modern History

"Within the compass of a single book the subtle interactions between indigenous tradition and successive layers of foreign influence could not be more skilfully analysed. . . . His story moves forward with a smoothness and vigour which are the combined product of literary skill and sound scholarship. . . . In short, this is probably the best survey of Indian history now available."
—*Times* (London) *Literary Supplement* (review of the original edition)
$10.00

FROM YOUR LOCAL BOOKSELLER OR ORDER DIRECT.

The University of Michigan Press
ANN ARBOR

The Washington Monthly

Editorial Advisory Board:
Richard Rovere, Chairman
Russell Baker, Edgar Cahn,
Murray Kempton, Peter Lisagor,
Hugh Sidey, James C. Thomson, Jr.

Editors:
Charles Peters, Editor-in-Chief
Taylor Branch, Suzannah Lessard,
John Rothchild.

Contributing Editors:
T.N. Bethell, James Boyd, David Gelman,
David Hapgood, Beverly Kempton,
Robert Rice, Jamie Rosenthal, John Wicklein,
Barbara Currier, Joseph Freitas, Jr., Planning.

Staff:
Carol Trueblood, Elizabeth Peters,
Anita Isicson, Irene Bald,
Susan Hornik, Bryan Ewing,
Allison Blount, Gloria Borger,
Michele Deschenes, Lance Morgan,
Luke Popovich.

Production and Design:
Tom Ricketts, Vint Lawrence,
Andrew Bornstein.

Published monthly by The Washington Monthly Co., 1150 Connecticut Ave., N.W., Washington, D.C. 20036.
Copyright ©1972 The Washington Monthly Co.
All rights reserved. Reproduction by any method whatsoever without permission is prohibited.

Subscription rates: U.S. and possessions—$12, one year; $20, two years; $28, three years. Foreign, including Canada, $1.50 per year additional surface; air mail rates available on request. Single copies, $1.

Unsolicited manuscripts must be accompanied by a stamped, self-addressed envelope.

Send all remittances and correspondence concerning subscriptions, undelivered copies, and change of address to 1150 Connecticut Ave., N.W., Washington, D.C. 20036.

Printed by The Lane Press, Inc., Burlington, Vt.

Second class postage paid at Washington, D.C. and additional offices.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

VOLUME FOUR NUMBER SIX
AUGUST 1972

Inside a Major Strike: Woodcock's UAW vs. General Motors *by William Serrin*	**The 1970** strike against General Motors was the most important union conflict in 25 years. How GM and the UAW benefited from the battle they needed, while the workers didn't fare well.	7
TIDBITS AND OUTRAGES		26
Aborting a Fetus: the Legal Right, the Personal Choice *by Suzannah Lessard*	A legal right that must be secured for all women is not an automatic moral right for any woman.	29
Prisoners of War, Prisoners of Peace *by Taylor Branch*	The confessions of the most used group in the country, the POW families. How they are imprisoned by doves as well as hawks.	39
The Brookings Budget: One Schultz Is Like Another(e) *a review by Charles Peters and John Rothchild*	Why the counterbudget created by Brookings' Charles Schultze doesn't differ much from the official version prepared by Nixon's George Schultz.	57
POLITICAL BOOK NOTES		62

LETTERS 4 **THE POLITICAL PUZZLE** 38 **MEMO OF THE MONTH** 55

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Letters

What's Wrong with McGovern

I wish I could express my deep regret that I ever subscribed to your magazine after reading the article, "What's Wrong with McGovern" by Suzannah Lessard [June, 1972]. I haven't read anything by his worst enemies that puts him in such a poor light. Now that we've had such a biased article about the "flaws in our favorite candidate," could we have one about the superb qualities that a lot of us Democrats seem to think he (McGovern) has to qualify him for the Presidency.

You need not expect me to renew my subscription or suggest that others subscribe to your magazine if that article on McGovern is the best that you can do.

Despite Miss Lessard's disparaging description of McGovern, my wife and I still expect to vote for him for the Presidency. That is, unless you do your best to prevent his nomination.

FREDERICK H. ALLEN
Portland, Me.

The editor replies:

Every person on our staff supports Senator McGovern, but we ran the article because we believe that the liberal press must criticize its own candidates. The failure to do so was, we believe, responsible for such things as the unquestioning atmosphere surrounding the Gulf of Tonkin resolution during the 1964 Johnson campaign.

Correction:

On page 14 of Suzannah Lessard's "What's Wrong With McGovern," a McGovern quotation is said to have been taken from *Washington Post* reporter Hobart Rowan's interview with the Senator. The interviewer was actually the *Post*'s William Greider.

Abolishing Social Security and Canceling the National Debt

I was delighted that you published the excerpt from my debate ["Social Security: The Poor Man's Welfare Payment to the Middle Class," May, 1972]. Several people have inquired as to whether I was also the author of the program to abolish the national debt ["The MacLeish Memorandum," by Taylor Branch, May, 1972]. Regretfully, I had to tell the truth.

MILTON FRIEDMAN
Chicago, Ill.

Milton Friedman teaches economics at the University of Chicago.

Having just read in the June issue of *The Washington Monthly* the inconspicuous acknowledgement that your recent article "The MacLeish Memorandum" concerning cancellation of the national debt was fictitious, I am now trying to find the right words to tell you of my reaction.

In these days of half-truths, lies, secrecy, public and private chicanery, distortion and coloration of facts for selfish and at times even evil purposes, there is an almost overwhelming desire on the part of many of us to find sources of truth to counterbalance this ugly picture.

The Washington Monthly was recommended to me as one source in which I might find thoughtful, carefully prepared articles based on fact, not fancy. I wanted to believe this and for that reason have read the few issues sent me with thoroughness, even though there was much in them I didn't particularly like. Nonetheless, in a desire for believable information and points of view I was willing to have my thoughts and ideas challenged. In that light I read "The MacLeish Memorandum." Although it seemed almost incredible, there is so much of the well-nigh incredible bombarding us each day that I found myself convinced, and even discussed the article at some length with others. Now I find it a hoax.

My first reaction was hot anger; but that has passed. What is left is a kind of bitter feeling that once again there is no sure place to turn for truth. You have destroyed my

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

belief in *The Washington Monthly* so that I can no longer credit its articles and I feel cheated. I've had faith in George Wald—was his article based on untruths, too? The terrible conditions at Buffalo Creek—were they also the figment of Bethell and McAteer's lurid imagination; and since McAteer is a lawyer with Ralph Nader's Center for the Study of Responsive Law, are both Nader and his Center open to suspicion? As you can see, the crack in my armor of faith is growing wider.

DORAS BRIGGS
Berkeley, Calif.

The editor replies:

When we prepared the article called "The MacLeish Memorandum" we were looking for an amusing way to present some serious criticism of the conventional liberal faith in the harmlessness of our ever-expanding national debt. We had no intention of trying to perpetrate a hoax, no idea that anyone would believe our batch of secret documents was real. Yet Mrs. Briggs and several other obviously intelligent readers were fooled. We don't like fooling people and hope Mrs. Briggs and the others we unintentionally misled will accept our apology.

In a time when the outrageously unbelievable so often turns out to be true (at least in regard to the activities of the American government), we should have identified the memo as fiction. It is, by the way, the only fiction we have printed. We intend to do more, but it will be clearly labeled.

The Empty Seat War

I wish to comment on Frederick Thayer's article "The Empty Seat War" (June, 1972). The article seems to make an attempt to defuse the "extraordinary consensus... developed around what can be called the Nader diagnosis" which obviously favors more competition in the airline industry. It further questions the "conventional wisdom" which prefers competition to monopoly. In support of these seemingly theoretical innovations, Mr. Thayer states that competition, at least in small business, fosters "insecurity of the population" by "building a crazed material single-mindedness that leaves no room for human values or the quality of life."

The article utterly fails to substantiate any of Mr. Thayer's conclusions. In the first place, the competition which Mr. Nader is asking for is in the major routes which are served by a handful of oligopolistic producers. Since the creation of the Civil Aeronautics Board in 1938, the number of trunk airlines has only reduced by mergers and acquisitions. The prices charged by these trunk air carriers are almost double the reasonable prices that would otherwise be available to consumers under competitive

FAT CATS & DEMO-CRATS

Or The Role of The Big Rich in the Party of the Common Man

by G. William Domhoff

Whatever happened to the party of the common man? Just ask the oilmen, bankers, and more who pull the Democratic Party's strings. Here, at last, is a searing indictment of fat cattism and a clarion call for political power to the people.
$5.95

At your bookseller or by mail:
PRENTICE-HALL
Englewood Cliffs, N.J. 07632

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

pricing. If Mr. Thayer's article proves anything, it is that the collusive air carrier regulation has created all kinds of wastes and mismanagement that are characteristics of monopolies or "shared monopolies." Secondly, Mr. Thayer's conclusion that open competition will deprive several communities of existing air services is also erroneous. Most of the smaller communities are presently served by "local service carriers." These carriers are sustained by federal subsidies, which amount to $68 million annually. At any rate, all these superficial theoretical evaluations are irrelevant to the subject of Mr. Thayer's article, namely, capacity-cutting agreements.

With respect to the three-carrier agreement which reduced the flights by 38 per cent on the major coast-to-coast routes, Mr. Thayer states that "the CAB and the three airlines deserve some praise for taking a hesitant step toward sanity." We disagree, and for sound reasons. We are not persuaded by the airlines' propaganda that the airline industry's major problem is "excess capacity," especially when more than one-half of our population has never travelled by air and the annual traffic growth rate is showing negative trends. The real and critical problems of this industry, as it used to be with the railroad industry, are overspending and monopoly control. This nation's major air carriers are controlled by a few banks and insurance companies who virtually decide how and to what extent the carriers should serve the public. These *de facto* managers of airlines buy airplanes and impose them on the carriers under extortionary lease arrangements. (The carriers pay more than $1 billion annually to these banks and insurance companies as interest charges and other payments.) It is simply misleading to talk about "overcapacity" without also talking about the reasons for such capacity and the capital investment involved in it. We are of the opinion that capacity-cutting agreements produce economic waste by under-utilization of aircraft and undesirably low productivity of invested capital. Even if the CAB wants to reduce capacity, it should be achieved by restraining carriers from acquiring more capacity, instead of encouraging partial or under-utilization of capacity already acquired. However, even at the risk of taking the blame for advocating competition and free enterprise, we still argue for more airline capacity to be filled by passengers generated by low and competitive prices.

The "present CAB," meaning the Secor Browne team, has permitted the carriers to increase air fares by 12 per cent across-the-board last year. If the increased fares failed to generate enough passengers to fill empty seats, the proper remedy is to reduce the fares and increase the traffic volume. If the airlines do otherwise, they would be doing it at their own peril. The traveling public has no reason to expect creative actions from the Secor Browne team which invariably rubber-stamps airline agreements. However, we expect more from members of the academic community who are supposed to base their views on objective analysis and creative thinking.

K. G. J. PILLAI
Washington, D. C.

Mr. Pillai is executive director of the Nader Aviation Consumer Action Project.

The author, Frederick Thayer, replies:

Which Pillai is the real one?

One Pillai wants growth everywhere, especially in travel; we should have more planes, airports, pollution, noise, etc. Everybody must fly! This is conventional growth economics at its worst, for it implies everyone should and does want more automobiles, lipsticks, electric toothbrushes, and whatever.

The other Pillai admits there may be *some* limit to the people, planes, and airlines flying between New York and San Francisco. Perhaps 15 airlines would satisfy him, but it is hard to tell. This Pillai would have the CAB prevent airlines from buying new planes, forcing them to fully use the ones they have. Does he mean the government should finance or guarantee airplane purchases? We have done this for local and foreign carriers; it removes "free" competition, gives the government its own vested interest, and causes subsidies (so local carriers can pay off the loans).

The second Pillai seems not to understand that parts of his argument are only a nastier version of mine, and he doesn't notice that for the CAB to dictate how many planes each company should have would make "competition" meaningless. Simply stated, this would be nationalized competition. Is this Naderism?

I tried to show that competition compels carriers to behave as they do, just as it *compels* gasoline companies to put four stations on every corner (which we pay for). Perhaps the "free competition" Pillai should meet the "strict regulation" Pillai; they might be able to decide which of them is "objective" and "creative." They also might discover that competition doesn't work, whether socialist or capitalist.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Inside a Major Strike: Woodcock's UAW vs. General Motors

by William Serrin

Everyone said, no, he did not want a strike. Leonard Woodcock, president of the United Automobile Workers, said that the union approached the negotiations with a "sincere hope and desire that we can work out an agreement with General Motors without a work stoppage." A settlement without a strike, Woodcock said, "would be the greatest contribution we could make to our sorely troubled country."

Earl A. Bramblett, General Motors vice president for personnel and the corporation's top negotiator, said he believed a strike could be avoided. "There is never a good time for a strike," Bramblett said. "Everybody loses and nobody wins. It is time for both parties to accept the fact that we have a greater community of interest than of conflict." James M. Roche, the General Motors chairman, said, "I hope the negotiations can proceed without a strike."

James Hodgson, Secretary of Labor, said that the companies and the union faced a "real bargaining problem" but that the "magnitude of the problems is never reason for having a strike." A strike, Hodgson said, was not inevitable.

But there is much posturing, much cant, in labor negotiations, and this talk was part of it. Certainly the leadership of the union and the companies wanted to reach a settlement without a strike—if that would have been possible. But it was not. A strike has value to both sides. The union, its members badly hit by inflation, had the largest and most expensive list of

William Serrin is a reporter for the Detroit Free Press. *This article is adapted from his book,* The Company and The Union, *to be published by Alfred A. Knopf in January.*

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

demands in its history. A strike, by putting the workers on the streets, rolls the steam out of them—it reduces their demands and thus brings agreement and ratification; it also solidifies the authority of the union hierarchy. The companies—particularly the stupendously large General Motors, against whom there was great union pressure to strike—were particularly intransigent. General Motors, like most businesses, the victim of rising costs, wanted to teach the union a lesson: take a strike, if it came to that, to slow cost increases and to gain concessions to improve its flagging productivity. "A strike," explains a man who has intimately observed automobile negotiations for two decades, "does not have to be a stress to be avoided. It can be a tool for agreement." A strike, he says, often is not a "centrifugal thing but a centripetal thing."

Emil Mazey, secretary-treasurer of the UAW and one of the union's founders, says, "I think that strikes make ratification easier. Even though the worker may not think so, when he votes on a contract he is reacting to economic pressures. I really believe that if the wife is raising hell and the bills are piling up, he may be more apt to settle than otherwise." In 1970, Mazey says, "A strike was inevitable."

As the largest and most American of industries, the automobile industry is the nation's bellwether, directly employing more than 800,000 workers; one in six jobs in America is linked to automobiles. More than 800,000 businesses in America, one out of every six firms in the country, depend upon the automobile industry. There are the parts companies (firms like Budd, Dana, Kelsey-Hayes, Bendix); glass companies (Libbey-Owens-Ford, Pittsburgh Plate Glass); tire companies (B. F. Goodrich, U. S. Rubber, Firestone, Goodyear); steel companies (U. S. Steel, Bethlehem, McLouth); aluminum companies (Kaiser, Reynolds, Alcoa); copper companies (Anaconda, Kennecott, Phelps-Dodge). Then there are, of course, the thousands upon thousands of small suppliers, gasoline stations, and service firms, the privately owned and operated businesses that line the main streets of nearly every city in the country.

In summer, 1970, the coming automobile negotiations were to be particularly critical—the most important labor talks in a decade, the most crucial talks in the automobile industry for a quarter of a century. For in the months to follow the auto talks, contracts covering more than five million workers would be negotiated—steel, copper, aluminum, can, railroads, meatpackers, the postal service—and the auto contract would do much to establish the pattern for these talks, and thus shape the economy as the nation entered the 1970s.

In that summer of 1970, White House economists said that the nation slowly, frailly, but appreciably, had begun a recovery from the recession spawned by the Vietnam war. If this recovery were to continue, the government said, a strike must be averted. Months before, President Nixon urged the nation's unions and companies to exercise restraint as contracts were put together; and at the White House, Nixon told leading automobile executives he hoped they were not planning for a strike. A strike, the President said, would seriously damage the nation's hopes for a stabilized economy. Yet this was a strange year of many whirling currents, and people in the White House also believed that if the auto union's demands were too large, if the union seemed too greedy, it would be better if the industry took a strike to place a lid on wages.

Money Isn't Academic

The first issue for the union, the companies, the workers, was wages.

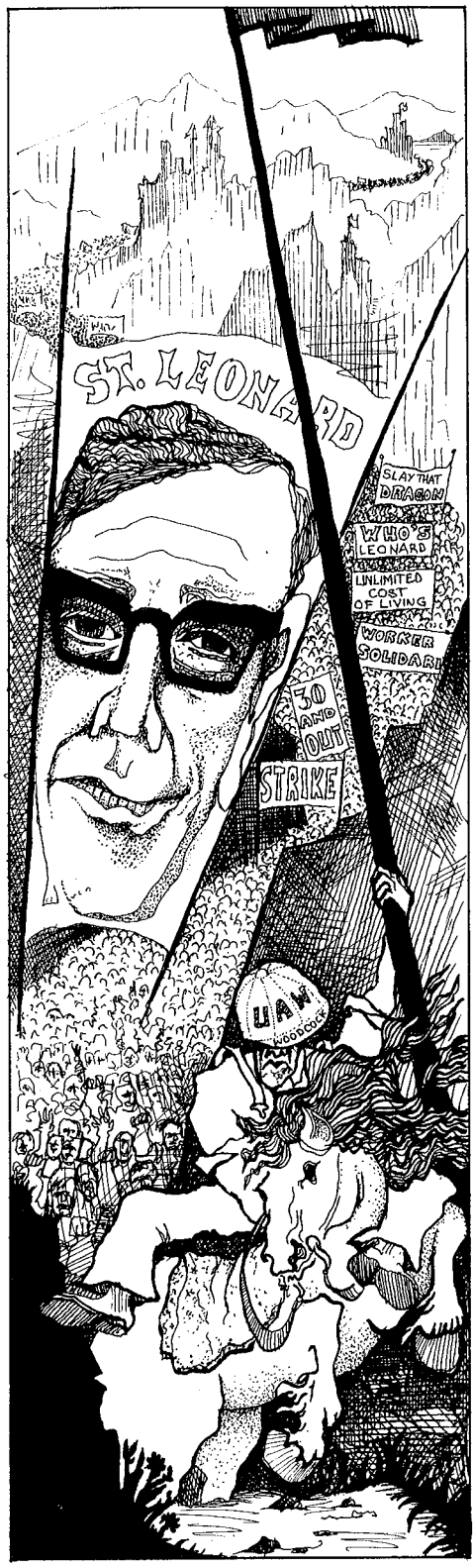
The workers wanted more money; they needed more, they deserved more. The union had won a six-percent annual wage increase in 1967 negotiations, but this increase had been eaten away by inflation.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Workers' real income the preceding three years, Woodcock said, had fallen 7.4 per cent. The typical auto worker, the assembler, was making about $10,000 a year—less than the Labor Department said was needed by a family of four to maintain a moderate standard of living. The Nixon Administration's anti-inflationary moves—increased unemployment, high interest rates—had harmed not the rich or the well-to-do, but the working class and the poor, the very people whom the inflation had hit the hardest. And now these people—epitomized by the auto worker—were being asked to lower their demands to stop inflation. At the same time, astronomical settlements, some of them greedy, had been won by other unions: a Teamster package of $1.85 an hour, or 44 per cent, over 39 months; a 42-per-cent printer's settlement at *The New York Times*; a building trades settlement that, in the Detroit area, reached at least 23 per cent over two years. Such settlements, Woodcock said, "were not academic to us."

A second major issue: the demand for unlimited cost-of-living increases. In 1967—in the last contract negotiation before his May, 1970, death—Walter Reuther had blundered and traded away an unlimited cost-of-living agreement at Ford in exchange for a ten-cent wage increase for the ever-restless skilled tradesmen, above the 20-cent increase for production workers; union economists had not believed that inflation would be a great problem in the next three years. Thus, when inflation skyrocketed, the eight-cent-a-year ceiling on cost-of-living increases that Reuther had accepted cost each union member between $700 and $1,000. Removing the ceiling, Woodcock and the companies knew, was a condition of settlement.

The third major issue, early retirement, had risen in the shops as workers rebelled against the monotony, drudgery, and meaninglessness of auto factory life. The terms



LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

of the demand provided that after 30 years of service, workers would be able to retire at a pension of $500 a month. No issue had more emotion attached to it. Union members wore buttons that said simply, "30-and-out"; they shouted "30-and-out" at union meetings; men and women working in the plants pleaded with their union leaders to win 30-and-out and let them escape the shops. At Flint, Michigan, the true birthplace of the union, a union man said, "If that Woodcock don't get 30-and-out, he is a short-term president."

GM and the '63 Yankees

The automobile companies, meantime, faced problems unprecedented in the industry's history.

Despite great lobbying on the industry's part, federal regulations were forcing them to place millions of dollars into intensive safety and anti-pollution campaigns, much of the money diverted from styling changes, long the cornerstone of the industry. There were other cost problems as well. General Motors was spending $225 million a year in medical insurance for its workers, up from $180 million the year before, and there were similar increases at Chrysler and Ford. Lee A. Iacocca, the swashbuckling Ford president, complained that the cost of an appendectomy had increased $160 in recent years, and that this, multiplied by scores of appendectomies throughout the Ford work force, amounted to many thousands of dollars, and goddammit, this represented costs that had to go into the price of an automobile. Labor costs throughout the industry, the executives said, had been climbing at 6.5 per cent a year the last six years, while productivity increases had been less than half that, in an industry where productivity increases usually surpassed by far the national average of three per cent a year.

And while costs were up, sales were down. Foreign manufacturers had moved into the American market with their excellent low-priced, small cars; by early fall they had seized an alarming 13 per cent of the market, a figure that by the end of the year reached 15 per cent, more than one out of every seven cars sold in America. Malcolm Denise, the Ford labor relations vice president, pointed out that 200 workers were needed to manufacture every thousand cars; in a 10-million, or normal, car year, he said, each percentage point of sales lost to foreign manufacturers represented 100,000 lost cars and 20,000 lost jobs.

The foreign inroads into American markets were all the more impressive in that the Japanese and some European manufacturers still had not developed extensive sales and service networks, meaning that the bulk of the sales were on the two coasts, especially the West coast, often the trend-setting area for America. This was to prompt Henry Ford II, the blunt Ford chairman who becomes especially bitter when discussing the

MOVING?

To be sure not to miss an issue of *The Washington Monthly*, give us:

Attach your Washington Monthly mailing label here

—**Six weeks' notice**

—**Your old address and zip code**
(Attach your mailing label in space to left)

—**Your new address and zip code**
(Fill in below)

name

address

city

state zip

Send to: The Washington Monthly, 1150 Conn. Ave. N.W., Washington, D.C. 20036

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Japanese, who have restricted American manufacturers from their markets while wreaking havoc in American markets, to warn, "Wait till the Japs hit Middle America."

With so many problems facing the auto companies, it seemed to some people that the industry was falling apart. Peter Drucker observed, "The whole industry is way over the hill. It's a declining industry. . . . You in Detroit are the last monument to yesterday. . . . You are as obsolete as the English midlands." Ralph Nader, the industry critic and business reformer, who, if there was in America a loss of affection for the automobile, had, perhaps more than any other man, done the most to bring it about, said that General Motors was obsolete, "where the Yankees were in 1963"—on the brink of collapse after years of supremacy.

The Undermined Team

The tone of the coming talks was set, perhaps, in a surprisingly outspoken speech by James Roche before the St. Louis Chamber of Commerce in February, 1970, a speech that stunned the auto industry with its shrillness so uncharacteristic of General Motors, a speech meant to show that inflation was the key issue for manufacturers as well as for workers, and that the union was chiefly to blame.

General Motors, Roche said, faced an acute crisis of cost. Interest rates, he said, were the highest since the Civil War. Payrolls, he said, had advanced six per cent; the price of steel had risen six per cent; lead, 24 per cent; aluminum, four per cent; nickel, 10 per cent—and all were continuing to rise. Industrial production, he said, had been declining for six months. Unemployment continued to increase.

While production and labor costs were rising, Roche continued, General Motors had "been able to recover only a fraction of recent costs through greater efficiency, only another fraction through price increases."

In 1969, he said, General Motors had earned about seven per cent on sales—$1.7 billion on sales of $24.3 billion. But five years before, he noted, in 1964, General Motors was "able to earn about $25 million *more* on a sales volume that was some $7 billion *less* than in 1969."

In 1969, Roche said, General Motors had lost 13.3 million man-hours in work stoppages, many of them unauthorized by the union. He said: "The efficient production of motor vehicles—the assembly-line process—is nothing if not a team effort. Absenteeism lessens the effectiveness of all employees on the line. It undermines the foundation on which efficient production depends.

"We must restore the balance that has been lost between wages and productivity. We must receive the fair day's work for which we pay the fair day's wages. . . . Nothing less than the American future—the kind of country we will pass on to our children—is at stake. Let us all hope that the men of labor and the men of management will have the vision to see the present grave imbalances and the courage to correct them."

Not in years had an automobile executive made such a speech. General Motors publicists stressed to journalists how important the corporation considered the address, meaning that they hoped it would receive prominent play in the papers, which it did. The company, it seemed, was sending a warning to the union: this year we will be tough, tougher than we have ever been before.

Two months after Roche's speech, Walter Reuther replied for the UAW at the union convention in Atlantic City. Addressing some 3,000 delegates, he said, "In the last 10 years, including 1969, when Mr. Roche said they were suffering a serious profit squeeze, the General Motors Corporation earned $14.8 billion. Or, to put it another way, every three-and-a-half years, General Motors had an income—a profit—equal to its total investment."

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Pot on a Silver Platter

As the companies were having trouble with the workers, so was the UAW.

More than 40 per cent of the union membership was under 30. These young workers, conceded Douglas Fraser, a union vice president and director of its Chrysler Department, had "different values than people of my generation." Even Reuther, a man who had grown out of touch with young workers ("Walter didn't like liquor," a journalist said, "so you can imagine what he thought of pot"), admitted, "There is a new breed of worker in the plant who is less willing to accept the discipline of the work place. He is unwilling to accept corporate decisions that preempt his own decisions. There is a different kind of worker than we had 25 or 30 years ago." A resentful local union president, an older man, said, "These people want everything handed to them on a silver platter."

The young men and women saw no reason to work themselves to the bone, as their fathers had done. Their fathers hated the drudgery, the repetitiveness of the assembly line, but they were older men, and older men are not rebellious; they had seen the Depression and they remembered it; they knew too what it had been like in the plants in the days before the union; and they had, in their years in the plant, come to accept plant life as the way plant life was meant to be. The young workers had not; they were rebellious; often they quit or stayed home, or harassed the foremen. Fuck this, the young workers said.

That spring, young workers at the Chrysler Sterling stamping plant in Sterling Heights, Michigan, a white working class suburb of Detroit, had rebelled, refusing to work overtime after 15 straight days on the job. What these workers were saying, according to Fraser, was, "I can meet all my worldly needs working five days a week. I've got no obligations, no family. Does the company have the right to deny me my social life?" Fraser said, "The answer, it seems to me, has to be no—the corporation doesn't have that right."

Absenteeism in the plants on weekdays had risen from 2.5 per cent during the 1950s and most of the 60s to more than five per cent in 1970. (The corporations were angered by this, yet the absentee rate at meetings of the 24-member General Motors board of directors was 5 per cent, and directors receive $600-900 a meeting, plus a sumptuous meal. Perhaps the workers are to be praised for reporting as faithfully as they do.) On Fridays and Mondays the absenteeism rate often soared to 15 per cent or more; General Motors and Ford had been forced to close plants because not enough employees had reported for work.

When this happened in Baltimore in April, with some 200 of 2,700 hourly employees skipping work, the plant manager sent letters to the workers addressed "Dear fellow employee and family" and asked for their "best effort in being at work every day on time." But such efforts showed few results. Once, as Fraser tells the story, a questioner asked a welder why he had taken a day off, why he was willing to get by on four days of pay a week instead of five. The welder stopped, raised his welding gun, tipped back his visor and said, "Because I can't get by on three."

Woodcock, the UAW president, said, "Maybe the Protestant ethic is breaking down." In September, two weeks before the strike deadline, Woodcock told cheering Chrysler workers that perhaps a strike would benefit this "new generation" of workers, maybe a strike would show them that "it is only through struggle" that unions achieve their demands.

Yet the older workers, the ones who had for so long put up with the heat, the noise, the monotony of the shops, the knowledge that as working men they were inferior to white-collar men, inferior to company executives, inferior to the young men coming out

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

of college and joining the company at white-collar levels—these men, many of them, were becoming dissatisfied too. They were tired, they were fearful of violence, they were distressed by the blacks, fed up with factory life, with going in, doing the job, coming home. They had come to hate their jobs; they wanted out.

It was their dissatisfaction that gave rise and support to 30-and-out. Fraser, a well-liked man who had come out of the old DeSoto plants to win union office, lamented, "I feel very badly about this unhappiness, because it wasn't always that way. Guys accepted the auto shop as a fact of life and went home, and you know, in those days, the escape, the recreation, was bowling or finally buying a home, which was really something then, or raising kids. And I guess their high ambition was to get their kids in college. And they seemed reasonably happy." But now, Fraser said, now "fellows my age—and I wouldn't want to say this in a mass meeting because it's so regrettable—guys who are 51, 52, 53, guys I worked with, are calling me up and saying, 'Doug, you just got to get this 30-and-out.' "

GM's Mighty Penny

Many of the union's leaders and many of its members believe—probably correctly—that the UAW is the most liberal and courageous of the nation's major unions. But the union had not called a national strike against General Motors, its largest, most powerful adversary, since the winter of 1945-46, when the two locked in a bitter struggle that lasted 113 days. That historic strike, the country's first major strike after the war, impressed GM's strength and intransigence upon the union leadership, particularly upon Walter Reuther. The two sides fought the last 30 days of the strike over a one-cent hourly wage increase, and toward the end, the story is told, Harry Anderson, the company negotiator, placed a penny on the bargaining table and said, "Walter, there it is, a penny. That's what this strike is

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

all about. And you're not going to get it." And Reuther never did. The union settled for the company offer. Yet, by establishing a reputation as a bold, imaginative man unafraid of even a huge company like General Motors, Reuther seized the union presidency. And the strike invigorated the union, giving it great morale for many years.

The lesson was learned, however, and in coming negotiations the UAW always turned on Ford, Chrysler, or American Motors when it named a strike target or when workers were ordered to strike. The union is a remarkably open institution, and Mazey, the secretary-treasurer, is candid in discussing why the union never went back to General Motors; it was, he says, simply a matter of being able to win larger contracts with less sacrifice at the other companies, and then to extend a newly won contract at, say, Ford, to General Motors and the others. (In 1955, the union and the companies had entered into a gentleman's agreement in which the companies that were not struck matched the agreement worked out at the target company.) "It is better to make the most possible progress with the least suffering," Mazey says. "That is, if you can push around a Chrysler Corporation, this is the thing you ought to do, instead of tackling a GM, which may not give you as much and may result in a long struggle."

General Motors, of course, was often displeased with the reciprocity. The General Motors men believed the company was tougher than the other companies, that, given GM's excellent money position and the firm's willingness to combat the union, it could force a much less costly settlement on the union than Ford or Chrysler. They believed that the other companies knuckled under, that they did not show the strength that should be expected from such a responsible firm as an automobile company. In 1955, when Reuther won historic supplemental unemployment benefits at Ford, forerunners of what amounts to a guaranteed annual wage, GM's Harry Anderson told him, "Walter, let me congratulate you for going to Ford. You never would have got that here."

No matter how practical this avoidance of General Motors may have been, the belief was growing in the ranks that the union lacked the courage to confront the corporation. Mazey: "The average person, the average worker, likes to take on the big guy, the giant. And GM is a giant. Chrysler, although it is the sixth largest corporation in America, is looked upon as a pygmy. The average person, if we took on Chrysler, would say, 'Well, hell, you took on Chrysler and beat them. So what?' " For both leaders and workers, a strike against General Motors in 1970 was a way to establish their manhood.

"A strike against General Motors is different from a strike against Ford or Chrysler," Fraser explained. "A strike against General Motors isn't just a strike, it's a crusade."

Even Walter Reuther, who had been avoiding General Motors, recognized the growing pressures to take on GM in 1970. At the UAW convention a delegate shouted from the floor that it was time, this time, after all these years, to challenge General Motors, and Reuther, quietly from the podium at the end of the huge convention hall, said, "We might just do that." The thought of closing his negotiating career (he was scheduled to retire before the next round of negotiations in 1973) with such a large, exciting battle, it can be imagined, appealed to Reuther; indeed, it was under Reuther's direction that the union built up a $120-million strike fund, largest in labor history, the kind of fund a union would need to strike the largest manufacturing enterprise in history.

The union demands were the largest ever, and Reuther endorsed them wholeheartedly, vowing at the convention, "We are going to fight on the picket lines if necessary to get these demands in 1970. . . . We are under no illusions that the corporations are going to roll over and play

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

dead." The cost-of-living money that would have gone to the workers if the contracts had not been changed in 1967, Reuther said, was not to be bargained for; it was, he said, "old money," not "new money," and all of it—26 cents by the end of April—was automatically due the workers. The workers, he said, needed a "bill of rights" in the plants, they needed longer vacations with vacation bonuses, a stock purchase plan, a voice in getting the corporations to stop pollution.

Certainly much of Reuther's support for these demands was designed to appease the workers. Much of it was the result of Reuther's penchant for rhetoric and grand statements, for despite his many accomplishments, Reuther was something of a windbag. Nonetheless, oddly for a man who prized flexibility in bargaining, Reuther had painted the union into a corner. "When you put in demands for all groups," one company bargainer said, "you know you can't do everything for everybody."

Then suddenly Reuther, this legendary man, was gone, killed six weeks before the talks were to begin when his chartered Lear jet crashed on a rainy spring night into an oak-and-jack-pine forest in northern Michigan as he headed for the union's handsome education and recreation center at Black Lake.

With Reuther dead, there was no one with the clout to go to the workers—as slim as the possibilities for this would have been even had Reuther been alive—and say, "This is a fine settlement; let us accept it; there is no need for a strike." Woodcock became president, and he felt pressure—pressures from the rank-and-file, pressures to create an image of the union as a strong institution, pressures to prove himself, to purge the memory of Reuther and at the same time to honor it—to strike General Motors.

In 1964 and 1967, while director of the union's General Motors Department, Woodcock argued that the union should confront General Motors. He was angered when he was overruled.

Whose Time Clocks?

Now, Woodcock knew he needed not just a large settlement, but a large settlement at General Motors, to enhance his political position within the UAW. He had been elected president by a 13 to 12 vote over Fraser, and while he had the support of the most powerful members of the 25-member executive board, the members with the largest constituencies (and union elections are decided on the basis of size of constituencies), he knew it was unwise to take chances. Woodcock seemed in no immediate trouble; yet, if he were branded a coward, if the settlement was not one that could be called a victory, a large victory, who could say what would happen? The union is an intensely political organization. "These guys have stereoscopic vision; it goes right around their heads," a mediator says.

Inflation, the damned inflation. That was the problem, Leonard Woodcock said, just as James Roche had indicated in St. Louis in February. But whereas Roche placed the blame on rising wages, Woodcock attributed the inflation to "the war and other unnecessary, useless military spending." The key to the 1970 negotiations, he said at General Motors the day the talks began, July 15, was to protect the workers against inflation. Irving Bluestone, Woodcock's former co-director at the General Motors Department, who had been appointed sole director of the department and a UAW vice president, presented the union position to General Motors.

First came the many non-wage demands the union had been formulating, often with much fanfare and headlines, for several months: voluntary overtime, the paid dental plan, an unbroken holiday between Christmas and New Year's, discounts on company products for blue-collar workers

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

and retirees like the company has granted for years to many white-collar workers, a paid holiday for workers with more than 30 days' service on the day of the birth of a child. The union also asked for a "harmony clause," which would pledge the corporation not to intervene in union attempts to organize white-collar workers, attempts which Reuther had begun in the late 1950s but which the companies had almost completely thwarted by granting white-collar workers the same increases that the union negotiated for its blue-collar workers.

Reflecting the popular concern about environmental pollution, much of that pollution caused by automobiles, the union challenged General Motors to reveal how much it spends each year toward eliminating pollutants from its automobiles and plants, and for comparison, how much it spends on advertising and styling changes. "The public has been left with the impression," the union said, "that the corporation places greater emphasis on the contour of the fender than on the control of poisonous pollutants." The union also declared that union men should sit as equals with corporation executives in meetings with government officials on both pollution and automobile safety.

In a most ironic demand, the union asked that time clocks be eliminated, Bluestone saying the clocks were "nasty" examples of the double standard between white-collar and blue-collar workers—ironic because at Solidarity House, the home of the union, janitorial and secretarial personnel punch time clocks. Emil Mazey explains that the union time clocks made for greater punctuality and efficiency.

We Are Stunned

The corporation men listened attentively, not interrupting, saying little. One reason was they had no great interest in many of these demands, especially such demands as the elimination of time clocks or the disclosure of the money spent on pollution control. They knew, as did the union, that there was no possibility the demands would be agreed to, that they were simply *pro forma* statements, once made, quickly forgotten. The union does this at all the contract talks, listing demands it wants and will bargain for, demands it would like to have but is not ready to fight for, demands it would like to have but knows it will never get, and demands it does not care about but which look good to the members and to the public.

The company men were really interested in demands that dealt essentially in money and would give an indication of how much a settlement with the union would cost the corporation. On Monday, July 20, the second week of talks began. Bluestone placed the major economic demands before the corporation: what he called a "substantial" wage increase, restoration of unlimited cost-of-living, and 30-and-out. In addition, the union asked for changes in the supplemental unemployment program—its form of guaranteed wage—so that, in the event of major layoffs, the fund would not go bankrupt and benefits be stopped.

The union demanded that the company pay .0025 cents an hour per employee to establish a union educational program, with half the sum—General Motors estimated the fund would amount to $2.5 million a year—earmarked for the union's splendid Walter and Mae Reuther Education Center at Black Lake. In a traditional rephrasing of its 1945-46 demand, the union asked that General Motors "open its books" to allow the union and public to see whether it could afford to meet the union's demands. Bramblett replied that the company each year issues "one of the nation's most comprehensive" stockholders' reports. With Bramblett's reply, the demand, which the union feels compelled to make at each negotiation, was forgotten.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Bramblett said he was stunned by the union's demands. They were, he said, "more far-reaching and extensive than anything we had read or heard about." The union's argument that the typical General Motors worker did not earn enough to maintain an adequate standard of living was foolish, he said, adding that he always had trouble "understanding these theoretical budgets which come out higher than most people make."

Bluestone, unsmiling, hair slicked down in the Robert McNamara style, said the companies always said that the union's demands were more far-reaching and extensive than anything they had read or heard about. Next day, General Motors issued what was perhaps the most harshly worded corporation statement since the angry days of 1945-46.

The Great Hiccough

The 45-page General Motors document declared that in past negotiations the corporation had granted the union many concessions—dues check-off, the union membership and representation provision—designed to assist the union in organizing and maintaining control of workers. But the union, the corporation charged, was not living up to its part of the bargain. The corporation declared: "Irresponsible behavior by some UAW committeemen is contrary to the intent and

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

purpose of the agreement. . . and must be corrected." Management has the right to establish reasonable production standards, the company said, and employees have an "obligation to make an honest effort to perform their duties in a proper manner." Instead, the company said, "tardiness, wasting time or loitering, careless workmanship, failure to follow instructions and abuse of employee facilities" seemed to be increasing.

Now Bluestone expressed shock. The union would study the complaint—something, he said, the union was always willing to do. But it appeared to him that the company was attempting to "legislate across the board so as to deprive the many who are deserving in order to correct the abuses of a few." He said it was inconsistent for General Motors to complain about rising medical insurance costs when the corporation never worked to halt Blue Cross-Blue Shield increases when the insurance company sought them. "Everytime the Blues wanted more, the UAW opposed it," Bluestone said. "But we never have seen the industry taking sides with us."

On July 27, the General Motors Corporation announced its second-quarter financial figures—profits of $473 million, $1.64 a share, up from $448 million, $1.56 a share, the year before. James Roche said that it appeared the low point in automobile sales had passed and that the outlook for third-quarter sales was good —provided there was no labor stoppage. Bluestone called the profits "stupendous" and said they reinforced "our claim that GM can well afford to offer substantial wage increases to its workers and meet the many other" union demands. He said: "GM has rarely been far wrong in its projections. We will rely upon their optimistic outlook"—meaning the union would use the high profit figures as justification for its demands.

If General Motors had no financial problems, the United Automobile Workers did. On July 30, the 24-member executive board voted to lay off some 108 members of its 980-member international staff and to cut back some 13 per cent of its clerical and janitorial staff. The board also ordered reductions in travel costs and office expenditures. The union's resources, Woodcock said, stood at a record $139 million, but the union had been operating at a deficit for several months.

Then, on August 26, the companies, in the virtually simultaneous announcements they are so fond of making, said they would make initial offers to the union on September 1. This announcement set off much speculation, and, for the first time in six weeks, brought excitement to the talks, for the offers would provide the first real signal of whether a settlement without a strike—the settlement everyone said the industry and the nation so sorely needed—could be achieved.

The company offers came at 10 a.m. two weeks before the strike deadline, the traditional time for the first offers.

Bramblett, who made the offer for General Motors, said it would cost the corporation $1.4 billion in wages alone over a three-year contract, adding that it was the largest economic proposal in General Motors' history. (Each offer made by the companies is the largest in each corporation's history, since it must be larger than the existing contract.) He said it was a "sound and realistic proposal under present economic conditions."

The companies' offers, each the same, consisted of a first-year wage increase of 7.5 per cent—26 to 48 cents per hour each year, including the 26 cents of disputed cost-of-living money. They did not mention the ceiling on the cost-of-living, meaning that the eight-cent-a-year ceiling was to be retained. They said nothing about 30-and-out, proposing instead that pensions for employees who reach age 60 and have 30 years of service be raised from $400 to $500 a month. They demanded that workers share future increases in medical insur-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

ance costs, and, to reduce costs and to act as an inducement for new employees to stay on the job, proposed that new hiring rates not be increased, meaning that new workers would not receive new contract rates until they had been on the job 90 days.

The union said it was stunned by the low offers. At a news conference, Bluestone said that the proposal amounted only to three-fourths of one per cent in new money—money beyond the disputed 26 cents. "The gap is enormous in every area," he said. "I cannot recall a time in the 22 years I have been here when we were as far apart this close to the expiration date."

Bluestone said: "GM may feel it has come up with a great offer, but it is essentially a hiccough."

The Script Calls for Shock

The opening offers were small—far too small. The union men *and* the company men knew this. Bramblett: "We had to make that offer in total darkness because he [Woodcock] wouldn't tell us anything. So we were sure we weren't going to put anything in it that wasn't essential and necessary. It wasn't a small offer, but we made it clear at the time that this was not the last word."

The General Motors offer, Woodcock told the cheering GM delegates, was "crap." He held the proposal high for the men to see, as if it were a dead cat. He read a sentence at the end of the proposal: "The company reserves the right to withdraw this contract at 11:59 p.m., September 14." Withdraw it, hell. They can shove it, he said.

He told the Chrysler delegates: "GM is the architect of this non-offer and Chrysler is the stooge for GM." He said: "We have heard the speculation that Chrysler cannot afford a strike. If that is true, they should quit running with the pack and sticking their necks out for General Motors."

On Saturday, September 5, a bright, clear early fall day, Woodcock went first to Chrysler and then to General Motors to list the union's specific economic demands for the first time, and it was the companies' turn to be stunned. They listened for an hour each as Woodcock and the other union men ticked off the demands: a wage and benefit increase of more than $2.50 an hour, including a first-year wage increase of 96 cents an hour; restoration of the old cost-of-living formula; and full 30-and-out.

The UAW said that the two sides were "far apart." Bramblett said that if Woodcock were serious, if Woodcock were "fixed on the items he gave us today," the two sides had a "real problem." Now that he had the specifics he wanted, Bramblett said, "I wouldn't say it makes me more optimistic. I'm more in a state of shock." Woodcock said this was a predictable response. "The script calls for them to pass from a state of surprise to a state of shock," he said. But he conceded that the two sides were as far apart as "from the fourth floor to the sub-basement."

The strike deadline was a week away. Sixty-two cents in first-year wage increases separated the two sides—34 cents offered by the company, 96 cents asked by the union—plus the other issues, many of which the two sides were as far apart upon as they had been July 15 when the talks began. On Tuesday, September 8, after a fruitless three-hour meeting with Chrysler negotiators, Woodcock declared, "I am a man of infinite faith, but I'm beginning to become doubtful" that a strike could be avoided.

On September 11, General Motors had made a second offer, a proposal it estimated would cost the corporation $1.91 billion in wages and fringe benefits, a proposal it said it was making to avert "a strike that nobody wants."

That Saturday, Woodcock returned to General Motors and, in a negotiation session that began at 7 p.m., reduced the union's demands, dropping the first-year wage demand from 96 cents an hour to 61.5 cents. He

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

refused to specify what the union wanted for wage increases in the second and third years, saying those increases would depend upon the agreement the two sides reached on cost-of-living. The sides were still 23.5 cents apart, and Bramblett said, "Time is running out." It was at this point, he says, that he realized if there ever had been a way to avoid a strike it had disappeared.

The next day, Sunday, September 14, the 24-member union executive board met for three hours at Solidarity House. The executive meeting over, Woodcock walked down the hall and informed the union's 12-member General Motors negotiating team of the union's decision: it would strike General Motors alone.

At 10 p.m. Woodcock received word from the East coast that the locals there were walking out, even though on the East coast, it was only 11 p.m. The workers were supposed to stay on their jobs another hour. The hell with it, Woodcock said, the deadline for the East coast is 10 o'clock, not midnight. So the strike—the ordained strike, ordained for months despite the talks and the optimism—began. Across the country in the large cities, the bleak factory towns, the blue-collar suburbs, in the farm lands where the new plants are, first on the East coast, then spreading to the Midwest and finally to the West, the plants, 138 in all, in Tarrytown, New York; McKeesport, Pennsylvania; Atlanta; Lordstown, Ohio; Levonia, Michigan; Detroit; Warren, Michigan; Edina, Minnesota; St. Louis; Oklahoma City; Beaverton, Oregon; Van Nuys and South Gate, California shut down.

Oiling the Deer Rifle

The strike at General Motors was a strike of stupendous size. The night it began, more than 340,000 General Motors employees walked out; now two weeks later, the number on strike or sent home by the corporation had climbed to nearly 400,000. Thousands of other workers in supplier plants had been laid off as suppliers curtailed or suspended operations. By mid-October, the number of workers on strike or idled by the strike would rise to more than 500,000. General Motors said that it was losing $90 million a day in sales, that suppliers were losing $40 million a day, that local, state, and national governments were losing $20 million a day in taxes.

As yet, however, the strike was having no real impact on the men and women most directly concerned—the strikers themselves. They were receiving $30 to $40 a week in strike benefits, $30 for a single worker, $35 for a married worker, $40 for a married worker with children. This was considerably less than the average of $196 a week in gross pay, $125 a week take-home. Still, in the first few weeks there was a euphoria, a carefree attitude among the workers, and the strike was much like a vacation: workers slept late, raked leaves, washed cars, worked on their houses, went pheasant hunting.

The union had been well prepared for the strike. Thousands of picket signs were printed weeks before the strike deadline and distributed to local union halls. The night the strike began, workers poured from the plants, some simply going home, some grabbing the signs and setting up the picket lines, making remarks to their buddies: See you after Christmas; Get your deer rifle oiled up.

But times change. The union has changed. This was the 1970s, not the 1930s. There was not in this strike quite the fervor, the excitement that might have been expected in a strike against this huge corporation, this old enemy.

"Picketing an empty plant is an obsolete exercise," says Emil Mazey. The union used mass picketing in the old days to insure that the companies would not operate the plants; today the companies would not consider operating the plants. Besides, Mazey says, picket lines can bring problems: the picketers start drinking and harass

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

the management men going through the gate. "The picketing we do now," Mazey says, "is to maintain tradition and let people passing by know we are on strike. We have no mass picketing today."

As an alternative to picketing as the standard for building and maintaining enthusiasm, the union runs strike schools. Once-weekly attendance is usually mandatory if workers are to receive strike benefits. The workers troop to the cement block and brick union halls, squeezing their cars into every possible space, sitting on the wooden or metal chairs to listen to what are often long, tedious declamations on the history of the union, the importance of the strike, brotherhood, and solidarity. Usually instructors from the union's education department conduct the classes, and they stress the important gains the union has won in its many years of struggle: higher wages, pensions, health and life insurance, holidays, supplemental unemployment benefits. Sometimes movies about Walter Reuther or the history of the trade union movement are shown. Sometimes the workers stand—this being an excellent opportunity, one of the few occasions many union members attend a union meeting—hand over heart, to recite the union's oath, which pledges the worker to observe the union constitution, to divulge no union secrets, and to "bear true and faithful allegiance" to the UAW.

Soap in the Washroom

The union and the corporation had not intended to return to bargaining on national money issues until they had made substantial progress in settling the 155 local negotiations which, with the national contract, had to be concluded before the strike could end. The local negotiations constitute a vexing problem to the corporation and the union. The right of local unions to bargain with plant executives was conceived by the union in the 1950s to help meet the rising dissatisfaction at the local level. The industry had become so large, the automobile plants spread so far from Detroit, that the local unions often felt neglected and unimportant. The national negotiators could not give substantial attention to local disputes, although issues stemming from local working conditions are often as important to the workers as the national issues of wages, health and insurance benefits, and retirement. It was Leonard Woodcock who won the right of the local unions to bargain with General Motors at the plant level—and with authorization from the international union to strike if their demands were not met—and this is noted by union biographers as one of his major achievements. The local talks demonstrate, the leadership says, that the union is a union *of* the membership—not *for* the membership.

In 1970, the local demands seemed more far-reaching than ever before. There were the standard demands, which usually appear in all negotiations: requests for protective gloves, aprons, parkas, sweatbands, plastic sleeves, knee pads; for correction of defective brakes on in-plant vehicles, installation of anti-skid materials on plant stairways, prohibitions against requiring workers to cross over assembly lines; for insect and rodent control, installation of fans, cleaner restrooms, removal of oil slicks on the floor, improved lighting; for more vending machines, more soap in the washrooms; for special relief time for hot and smoky jobs. But there were other larger, somewhat extraordinary demands: for free lunches and free legal advice, for free service on workers' cars, for day-care centers near plants. At UAW Local 322, a large Cadillac local on Detroit's west side, the membership demanded that the corporation install more toilets; the local president, Frank Runnels, says, "There are executives with more johns in their homes than we have in some of our departments." The local also

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

The Presidency

Reprints from
The Washington Monthly

David S. Broder
THE FALLACY OF LBJ'S CONSENSUS

Russell Baker and Charles Peters
THE PRINCE AND HIS COURTIERS: AT THE WHITE HOUSE, THE KREMLIN, AND THE REICHSCHANCELLERY

James David Barber
ANALYZING PRESIDENTS: FROM PASSIVE-POSITIVE (TAFT) TO ACTIVE-NEGATIVE (NIXON)

Hugh Sidey interviews Bill Moyers
THE WHITE HOUSE STAFF VS THE CABINET

Thomas E. Cronin
OUR TEXTBOOK PRESIDENT

Howard E. Shuman
BEHIND THE SCENES AND UNDER THE RUG

All six of these reprints can be ordered for $3.00. Send your check or money order to:
The Washington Monthly
1150 Connecticut Ave. NW
Washington, D. C. 20036

demanded more fans, more water coolers, and the establishment of banking facilities in the plants so that workers could enjoy the white-collar amenity of cashing their checks during the day on corporation time. What the local demands illustrate—most of them represent benefits that are given to white-collar workers without thought, and become frivolous only when blue-collar workers seek them—is the double standard that exists in American labor.

Give Him What He Needs

The plan to concentrate on settling local disputes was clearly not working. Some six weeks had passed, and many local leaders were dragging their feet: only 52 local agreements had been reached. General Motors had wanted to settle about 70 per cent, or 110 of its 155 plants before working at the national level, in an attempt to guard against repetition of the 1964 situation when it settled a 10-day strike with the UAW but was troubled for several weeks by unsettled local disputes. In 1967, the national Ford strike was settled after five weeks, but unresolved local issues kept Ford shut down three more weeks.

The strike was almost two months old and the situation had changed in those two months. Even for General Motors, this huge, profitable enterprise, the strike was beginning to hurt; 140,000 white-collar employees were drawing full wages, a drain of millions of dollars a week; the supply of automobiles in dealers' hands was almost exhausted. What would the corporation gain by continuing the strike? A strike through Christmas, Roche knew, would, as Woodcock had said, generate intense bitterness. If the workers were still on strike through the cold and snow of Christmas and New Year's, it would cause intense public relations problems for General Motors.

Most important was the fact that the union had indicated in precise terms that it was ready to settle and

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

that Woodcock, whom Roche knows well and respects, had laid out exactly what he said he needed for ratification. It was more than General Motors had hoped the settlement would be, but not that much more. In fact, Woodcock was asking for nothing that the corporation, in the days before the strike, had not told the union it could have if it wanted to settle. Woodcock's demands were reasonable, much more reasonable than the settlements won by the Teamsters, the building trades, *The New York Times* printers; it was a settlement the corporation could live with. The corporation understood Woodcock's situation in leading his first national negotiation. What effect would a continuing strike have upon his position in the union? What would the corporation win by inflicting a defeat upon Woodcock and upon the union? Would a continuing strike impair his position? Could he conceivably lose control? Roche, in consultation with corporation vice-chairman Richard Gerstenberg, GM President Edward Cole, Bramblett, Donner, and a handful of other board members, made the decision: give the union what Woodcock said was needed for ratification.

The company granted each demand Woodcock had made, demands he could have had in September. The average wage boost of 51 cents for the typical worker, the assembler, meant that the union had reached what Woodcock called the "magic 50-cent circle," the wage figure that would be most easy to sell to the membership. Unlimited cost-of-living was restored, although the union agreed to a corporation demand that payments not begin until December 7, 1971. Woodcock also won the compromise he had been seeking on 30-and-out. Beginning October 1, 1971, workers with 30 years' service would be allowed to retire at any age; they would receive a pension of $500 a month if they were age 58 or over, and the $500 would be reduced by eight per cent for each year the worker was under age 58. At age 62 and again at age 65 the pension would be reduced as the worker started receiving Social Security benefits. The important concession was that beginning October 1, 1972, workers with 30 years' service would be eligible to retire on the full $500 pension at age 56. The corporation also agreed to Woodcock's demand for an increase in supplemental unemployment funding, raising the corporation's contribution from a maximum seven cents an hour per person to 10 cents an hour. The union's demand for a Christmas-to-New Years holiday was compromised.

There were other major items of agreement. In what was described as an attempt to combat absenteeism and tardiness, the two sides agreed to establish a joint orientation committee to instruct workers on the conditions they could expect when they went to work in the automobile plants, on their responsibilities to their employer and on their rights as union members. To provide an incentive for new employees to stay on the job—and to provide a large savings for the corporation—the union agreed to a company demand that the starting wage of new employees be 20 cents below the standard wage instead of 10 cents below as it had been for years; not until the employee had been on the job 90 days would he receive the standard wage.

The Final Settlement

It was over. Months of planning, months of negotiation. Two months of strike, millions of dollars in strike benefits, millions of dollars in lost profits. It had been close, and Woodcock and Bluestone and the other union executives had been gravely worried, worried that the settlement, achieved at the last possible moment, might be junked. But Woodcock had gotten it through; he had sold the contract. Bluestone called for a vote. Emil Mazey said it was 9-1; Bluestone said it was 4-1. No one knew, for it was so overwhelming that no one

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

counted. The General Motors conference, for all practical purposes, had unanimously recommended that the agreement be ratified. Next week, the 385,000 General Motors workers across the country voted on the contract; the vote took a week, but the margin was clear—"a landslide margin," the UAW said—367,533 to 11,546. On November 21, shortly before 5 p.m., Woodcock and Bluestone drove to the General Motors Building and formally notified Earl Bramblett that the General Motors strike, the most costly strike in history, was ended—69 days after it had begun.

General Motors lost $1 billion or more in profits. The corporation says it lost production of some 1.5 million cars and trucks; few of these sales, it says, were recovered in 1971. Dividends in 1970 were down from an expected $5 to $2.09 a share, a gap of $600 million.

The strike had a crippling financial effect upon the UAW. It paid out more than $160 million in strike benefits. It was forced to mortgage its recreation and education center at Black Lake. In repaying its bills it paid more than $2.5 million in interest, chiefly $496,000 to the General Motors Corporation for an insurance payment loan, and $2 million to the Teamsters Union. A check for $15 million, part of the money the UAW owed General Motors for payment of its medical and life insurance premiums, was the largest check Emil Mazey had ever written. To ease its financial situation, the international union, at a special convention in November, 1971, in an action that was strongly contested, pushed through a restructuring of its dues, directing that local unions be allowed to keep 37 cents out of each dues dollar instead of 40 cents, the union's practice for many years. The three cents went to the International to help in the financial crisis.

A central question: what of the working conditions that the union leaders condemn so vigorously and dramatically as negotiations open, but which, months later, by the time contracts are reached, have been forgotten? If what the union leaders say of the plants is true, that in so many cases they are miserable, oppressive places; if what the workers say is true, that factory work is boring and meaningless, that they wish they had never gone into the plants, that they believe they have wasted their lives; if what the corporations say is true, that they are aware of the difficulties of plant life, that they read the writings of the sociologists and psychologists, that they wish to make plants as liveable as possible—if this is true, why is so little done in negotiations to change plant life?

At the union convention in April, 1970, Reuther had declared: "We are not just about economics. This union was not born just because of the struggle for another dollar in the pay envelope. . . . In 1970 let us never forget that fighting to improve working conditions, to provide dignity on the job, always has to be an important item on our agenda." Yet, in automobile negotiations, like in most labor negotiations, the first items that are forgotten are the demands for improvement in working conditions, demands that would change the nature of the relationship between union and corporation. Admittedly, there are considerable negotiations on the local level concerning plant-by-plant working conditions.

A labor journalist: "The sense of self-esteem of the average automobile worker is damn near nonexistent. . . . You take a guy and you beat him down the way you get beat down in an auto plant, and you burden him with the kind of consumer goodies and time payments that a guy gets involved in, and he really is trapped. And if you say to him—especially in a bad year like 1970 was—what do you want? Money? Or do you want job security or do you want improvement in your working conditions? He is going to go for money. . . . So you have this phenomenon every time of

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

working conditions being terribly important when they go into negotiations, when the conventions are held, but they just kind of leech out because they are really not a priority item for anybody—and because they attack, directly, the auto company's prerogative of running the company itself."

Lenin Didn't Make It

The UAW—like nearly all large American labor unions—works for little more than a larger share of American abundance. It makes no effort to win what the union leadership so enthusiastically speaks of, the progressive achievements of European labor: the placing of workers on boards of directors or the establishment of worker councils to allow workers to have important voices in production and management. The idea of worker participation in management or worker democracy is as foreign to UAW as it is to General Motors.

No real bargaining skill is required to win large wage increases in the automobile industry, the richest industry in America, one of the richest enterprises in history. The UAW does what it believes the rank-and-file wants it to do—ask for more money, more time off the job. The leadership seemingly has little trust in the rank-and-file; it will not go to the workers and say that a large wage increase is unjustified, or that there are goals of greater importance than winning increased wages—let us change the factory system rather than increase wages or take more time off the job. A Pontiac foreman says, "Most guys actually don't believe that pay raises are the answer to their problems." A utility worker at Cadillac: "To get a raise ain't worth it. You get more money today and prices go up tomorrow."

For all the UAW's liberalism—for all Reuther's rhetoric—the assembly lines remain drudgerous, monotonous places. A long-time aide to Reuther: "I think a lot of conditions would have changed anyway, with technology and so on. So it's hard to say what the direct result of the presence of the union is and what isn't." A member of the revolutionary Congress of Black Workers: "Woodcock is a model man, compared to Meany. But that doesn't mean anything in terms of real problems people run into in the shops. These fuckers, man, they got a nice position on the war, nice position on civil liberties, blah, blah, blah. It ain't got a goddamned thing to do with the conditions that's kicking the ass out of the motherfucker out there in Department 78, Department 25. On the question of conditions, the company ain't done a motherfucking thing about it, and the union don't do nothing." One must realize, a UAW executive says, that as long as men build automobiles, as long as the assembly line exists, shop conditions likely will not change in any fundmental way. He says that one must realize that "in negotiations, you can't get into this." This is unfortunate, he says, but true.

Time has altered the relationship of the two institutions, the automobile companies, and the union.

What the companies desire—and receive—from the union is predictability in labor relations. Forced to deal with unions, they want to deal with one union, one set of leaders, and thus they have great interest in stability within the UAW and in a continuation of union leadership. They want, too, to have the limits of the bargaining clearly understood and subscribed to. "GM's position has always been to give the union the money, the least possible, but give them what it takes," says a former negotiator. "But don't let them take the business away from us." The union has come to accept this philosophy as the basis of its relationship with the companies—it will get money, some changes in work procedures, usually nothing more. "We make collective bargaining agreements," Reuther once declared, "not revolutions."

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

TIDBITS and...

Proxmire Off Camera

Don Riegle of Michigan has written an absorbing diary entitled *O Congress* (Doubleday). Here is one day, February 22, 1972, that helps explain why conservatives win the off-camera battles that liberals so often lose:

At two o'clock this afternoon the Foreign Operations Subcommittee met behind closed doors to discuss last-minute developments before going on to the long-awaited Senate-House conference on the foreign aid appropriation bill. Otto Passman was talking excitedly, shuffling his papers and exhorting us to support all of his recommendations. Conscious of his own fidgeting, he muttered, "I feel as nervous as a reformed whore the first time in church."

Frowning and waving his arms, Otto warned that the Senate conferees wanted to "roll us" in the conference. They wanted to cut out military assistance programs and would seek an agreement that the House would have to reject. Otto lamented the fact that he had been forced to become "a defender of foreign aid." But he was only against "these irresponsible reductions, ya understand?" Sweeping his arms, blinking his eyes and looking over the rims of his glasses, he urged us to concentrate on his words. "As Governor Long used to say, 'Listen good.' Now Senator Fulbright. . ."

"You mean Senator Half-Bright," John Rooney interrupted.

". . . Senator Fulbright," Otto went on, "has kept this bill bottled up for nearly eight months. Obviously, those people want to embarrass the President while he's in China. I'm not gonna let them do it." Otto ran through the list of items to be considered in the conference: Alliance for Progress, international organizations, population control programs, American schools abroad.

"What's the money for in this population control program?" Doc Long asked in a nasal voice.

Otto ignored him, but Long persisted. "The population control money—what's it being spent on?"

"Rubbers!" Otto thundered, and the subcommittee roared.

Later we walked as a group to the Senate-House conference—five Republicans and five Democrats—with Otto setting a brisk pace. It was clear he took a dim view of Wisconsin Senator William Proxmire, the chairman of the Senate conferees, who was thought to oppose many of his favorite projects.

"This man Proxmire," Otto said, grabbing my arm, "he doesn't know sheep shit from cotton seed."

Bill Hathaway, a Democrat from Maine, overheard his remark. "Is this the Agriculture Committee?" he asked with a smile.

The conference itself lasted two and a half hours but turned out to be no contest. Proxmire seemed preoccupied. In a gesture of seeming good will and flexibility, Otto conceded several minor points to the Senate conferees. But when it came time to discuss the major items his graciousness turned to granite. He had his facts and figures in order and used his expertise to bulldoze the conference. Everything considered, Otto won the day. Had this been a football game, the score would have been something like 52 to 6. As one of the conferees remarked to me when we left the room, "Otto sure took Proxmire's pants down this afternoon."

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Chugging with Spirit

One reason so few trains run these days may be that many of them have run off the track. According to the Federal Railroad Administration, the number of derailments increased 250 per cent between 1963 and 1970, even though the number of miles traveled decreased by 12 per cent.

Railroad	1963	1970
Baltimore & Ohio	45	73
Boston & Maine	6	21
Chesapeake & Ohio	15	69
Delaware & Hudson	6	8
Erie-Lackawanna	9	48
Lehigh Valley	1	16
Central of New Jersey	5	36
Norfolk & Western	7	21
Penn Central (system)	171	523
Reading	12	55
Gulf, Mobile & Ohio	5	7
Illinois Central	10	66
Louisville & Nashville	23	169
Seaboard Coast Line	13	50
Southern (system)	43	83
Santa Fe	17	64
Chicago & North Western	36	194
Burlington Northern (system)	33	126
Milwaukee Road	12	44
Rock Island Lines	10	133
Rio Grande	1	2
Kansas City Southern (system)	7	49
Missouri-Kansas-Texas	52	63
Missouri Pacific (system)	19	58
Frisco	12	40

Patriotism at HEW

In our article on canceling the national debt (May, 1972), we pointed out that smart employers do not buy the government bonds they urge on their employees. Recently Philip Shandler reported in the Washington *Evening Star* that this was true of Health, Education and Welfare Secretary Elliot Richardson, his bond drive chairman, Deputy Assistant Secretary Norman B. Houston, and 14 other top HEW officials.

White House Age

A report of the White House Conference on Aging contains this sentence: "Aging produces an acceleration of death rates as time progresses, resulting in a finite life span for all species which is predictable and unyielding."

OUTRAGES

Pork in the Honey

Rep. Silvio Conte explains the government's beekeeper indemnity program under which we reimburse beekeepers for bees killed by pesticides:

At present, 28 beekeepers are filing claims, each of which totals $100,000. At a maximum of $20 per destroyed hive, that is a lot of dead bees. The beekeeper blessed with the largest quantity of dead bees appears to be Jim's Valley Apiaries of Sunnyside, Wash. He has submitted claims for over $1½ million over the past five years. . . .

According to the claims Jim has submitted. . . he has lost a minimum of 12,937 hives from pesticide activity each year for the past 5 years. . . .

When my friend Mr. Whitten, of Mississippi, questioned the administrator over the suspicious nature of these figures, the administrator could only answer:

We will strengthen the record the next time we come up.

That reassuring answer came from Administrator Frick of the Agriculture Conservation and Stabilization Service.

Even if we assume for the sake of argument that the claims were based on an accurate count of bee corpses, how do we know that the bees died from pesticides. Mr. Frick testified that they have not even checked on the cause of death to justify the claims. If bees die in an area where pesticides are used, we pay for them—all of them. Apparently, in these areas bees can only die from one cause.

You may wonder, justifiably, what the Department of Agriculture is doing to take action against the people who are applying pesticide in such a way that results in bee deaths. At the hearings, my colleague Mr. Andrews of North Dakota asked Mr. Frick:

Do you proceed against the incautious or imprudent chemical applicator?

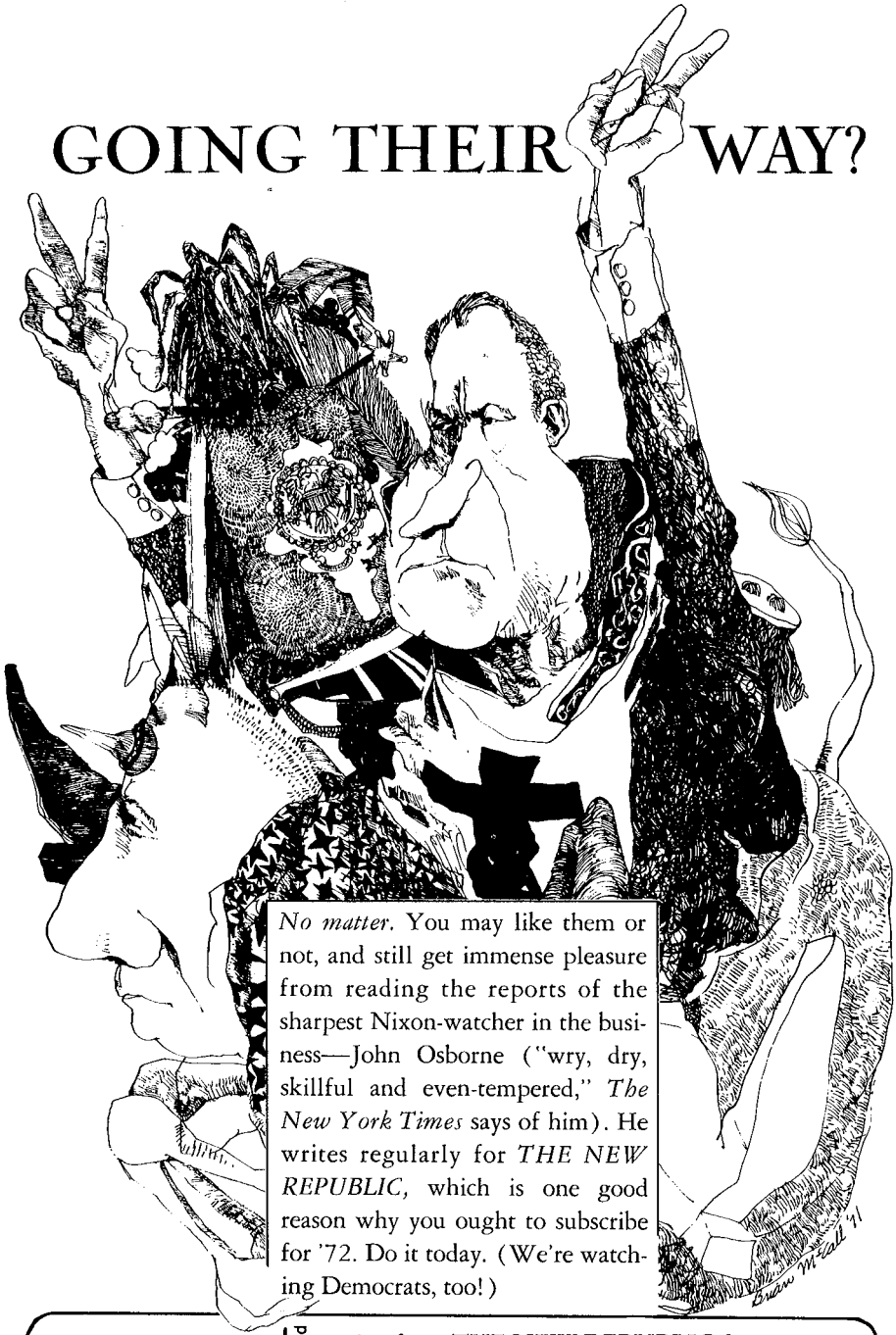
The answer was "no."

Mr. Andrews continued:

In other words, an individual can fly over bee colonies and lay down pesticides and irrespective of his liability, you go right ahead and pay for the bee loss.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

GOING THEIR WAY?



No matter. You may like them or not, and still get immense pleasure from reading the reports of the sharpest Nixon-watcher in the business—John Osborne ("wry, dry, skillful and even-tempered," *The New York Times* says of him). He writes regularly for *THE NEW REPUBLIC,* which is one good reason why you ought to subscribe for '72. Do it today. (We're watching Democrats, too!)

THE NEW REPUBLIC

☐ Bill me ☐ Payment enclosed

Send me THE NEW REPUBLIC for **30** weeks and bill me **$9**.95 wm-1

Mail to: Circulation Department
The New Republic, 381 W. Center St., Marion, Ohio 43302

Name

Address

City State Zip

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Aborting a Fetus: the Legal Right, the Personal Choice

by Suzannah Lessard

The belief that abortion must be legally available to those who want it comes to many of us first as a gut certainty, not that the procedure itself is morally acceptable, but that to deny women the option is intolerable and insane. That intuitive recognition is most likely to spring either from experience, or having been close to people who have been through it—from one way or another having gotten into the shoes of an individual faced with the dilemma of an unwanted pregnancy. The intimate appreciation of what's involved is why so many women, sometimes to the jeopardy of the cause, take the issue so personally. A friend of mine, who has had an abortion and who considers the moral implications insoluble, described coming out of a museum into a demonstration against legal abortion. "There they all were with little children, chanting these slogans, and I just sat down and cried. I thought they were trying to stamp on me, that if they had their way I wouldn't have any choice." In print this attitude looks childishly selfish and petulant, but it is a primal and very honestly expressed feeling. While

Suzannah Lessard is an editor of The Washington Monthly.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

it won't get one very far in the attempt to build a philosophical edifice justifying abortion, understanding the strength of that feeling is the key to understanding why so many women appear irrationally certain about a question which is patently conflict-ridden and inescapably charged with ambiguities. The feeling doesn't say "I have a right to an abortion"; it says "you have no right to decide for me one way or the other and your presumption to do so is violently offensive."

Twilight Zone

Moving backward from this gut certainty, one blunders into a wilderness of intellectual constructs built in the attempt to either condemn or justify abortion in a rational, consistent manner. Many of them are cockeyed; some, on both sides, are orderly and impressive, but none of them contain the matter satisfactorily because the basic question—what is the value of the life of a fetus—is unanswerable and therefore a matter of faith. The second thing one notices about both sides is that besides being ferociously dogmatic and blind to each other's points, the emotional pitch of the battle is deafeningly high. That, no doubt, is because if it's difficult to discourse with someone you consider a murderer, it's equally, if not more difficult, to be open-minded toward a person who is calling you one.

Looking at the inadequacy of the constructs on either side, there seems little point in trying to erect a more perfect one, since at bottom it is a matter of faith and people who hold the opposite faith are not likely to be persuaded otherwise. At best one can hope that the Right to Lifers will acknowledge that the question is ultimately imponderable, and that those who press the case for abortion have as much right to their belief as their opponents. At most, the fetus exists in a twilight zone of humanity. Despite their repeated use of the word murder, even the most virulent of the abortion opponents aren't arguing that abortionists and consenting mothers be given prison terms remotely like those given murderers. A miscarried fetus is not mourned the way even a one-day-old child would be. So to the rhetorical question put by the Right to Lifers—does the human creature suddenly undergo some absolute transformation in the short passage from the womb to the outside world—the answer is yes, at least people have always behaved as though that is what they believe. According to Kinsey, one out of four American women has privately wrestled with that question in a very immeidate sense and has decided to have an abortion. The law which forced them to take the often high physical risk of going to illegal practitioners was passed in the 19th century, not for the protection of the fetus, but, ironically, for the woman's protection, because it was at that time a far more dangerous operation than normal childbirth. The transformation of the legal issue into a debate over the right to life of the fetus as opposed to the safety of the procedure for the woman has occurred not through legal process but in the minds of the latter-day opponents of abortion. Now that abortion is eight times safer than childbirth, the only question that remains is whether a woman has a right to decide on her own what course to take in this intensely personal matter of such far-reaching consequence to herself. The right to privacy is the basis of the case pending before the Supreme Court, and so it should be.

'A Mass of Protoplasm'

The failure of both sides to distinguish between the legal and the personal aspects of the issue has been one of the reasons, I think, for the bad blood and seemingly hopeless division on fundamental principles between the two groups. I don't understand the strident ferocity of the

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Right to Lifers, so I can only say that their absolute refusal to even acknowledge that there might be a matter of separation between state and private life indicates that they have confounded the two perspectives. I do understand the stridency of the feminist position. Their doctrinaire intensity is due in part to the fact that the way the still-fragile crusade ends will vitally, drastically, affect the lives of millions of women, and in part to the rage which an intrusion of the state into this area inspires. But I don't think I'm alone in being acutely uncomfortable with many of the arguments and descriptions of the issue as they have evolved on the pro-abortion side, or in feeling that many of the positions taken serve only to tie the knot more tightly in the minds of opponents and waverers. I can best describe the source of that discomfort as the failure of the "movement," not unlike the opposition, to distinguish between abortion as a legal option and abortion as a personal decision.

For instance, the tenet that the state has no more right to interfere in an abortion than it does in a tonsillectomy (or any other form of minor surgery) is often transformed into a description of abortion as the equivalent of a tonsillectomy. At least for an awful lot of women, their belief that the state should keep out nothwithstanding the psychological, emotional, and just plain personal elements involved in deciding to have an abortion make such an equation outlandish. Another point of wild confusion between personal questions and political questions has involved the description of the fetus. A fetus, even at two months, is a good deal more than a "mass of dependent protoplasm," as Gloria Steinem recently wrote in *Newsweek*. It has a very well-defined human shape—head, back, legs, arms, sometimes hands and feet. It's growing, and it is highly likely to become a separate human being if left alone, a fact which certainly can't be said of just any blob of protoplasm, and which any intelligible description of the fetus would have to be based on. To describe it that way is either extraordinarily ignorant, or an absurd reduction of all protoplasmic—i.e. "living"—forms which renders any distinctions between them impossible, or a blatantly false description of reality in order to make it conform to ideological lines.

Reaction formation along ideological lines has cropped up in several areas of the new feminist movement. In the early stages of most revolts, the self-overhaul into a catechism of "correct" responses is prevalent, and often for good reasons. I think a lot of women need to go fanatically ideological for a while because they can't in any other way overthrow the insidious sense of themselves as inferior, nor otherwise live with the rage that comes to the surface when they realize how they have been psychically mauled. But I don't think that state of mind—hopefully temporary—is the strength of the movement. It has very little to do with working out a new, undamaging way of living as women. Specifically with regard to abortion, just because it's an essential goal in building a new world for women to convince the state that it has no right to see abortion any differently than a tonsillectomy, it does not mean that whatever feelings a woman having an abortion might experience over and above what she experiences when undergoing a tonsillectomy are counterrevolutionary.

Brainwashed Plumbing

A critically important part of the movement has been the de-mystification of a woman's sexual and reproductive life and the substitution of scientific education where fear, uncertainty, guilt and ambivalence, existed before. It's been a great help to learn to look at our bodies as plumbing rather than as mysterious, at once glorified and faintly disgusting things, as it's a great help to any human being undergoing a physical-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

medical operation to overcome fear by thinking of what is going on in those terms. Knowing what's happening scientifically helps put you on top of it. But to carry this revelation to the point where you insist that it's nothing but plumbing, that bearing a child or aborting a fetus are different only in a neutral sense, to me turns what should be a liberation into a denial of the real self as violent and as destructive as the old mystique in its heyday. There is little question that many of our reactions, particularly those relating to sex and reproduction, have been formed by social pressures under which we grew up, and there's little question that many of them are unhealthy and imprisoning. Nevertheless, I am not only affronted when, for example, it's suggested to me that all my feelings about abortion, since they don't conform to ideology, are the result of brainwashing, but I think it's an absurd accusation, which, taken to its logical limits, reduces the human being to a blank.

To dictate how women "should" feel about abortion—to say they "shouldn't" feel it's as inconsequential to their inner life as having a tooth pulled—would be to fall into the same fallacy as the positions under criticism. I will admit, however, that I suspect any grown woman who claims that deciding to have an abortion was a totally neutral act of either being afraid of the truth, of having artificially overhauled her emotions to conform with ideology, or, as Simone de Beauvoir suspected 20 years ago when she wrote *The Second Sex*, of being protected from her true feelings by her political environment. I'm not implying that the experience must be a great agonizing tragedy, just that more is involved than the removal of a blob of protoplasm and that most women know that and react accordingly.

'Nobody on the Table with You'

Since legal abortion is relatively new, the only sources of collected information on how women react to the experience are limited to a few formal studies and the cumulative wisdom of counselors. (Many clinics maintain a large staff of counselors to deal with physical fears and psychological conflicts.) Since counselors are immersed daily in the actuality of going through with an abortion, they tend to be less interested in doctrine and focus instead on trying to understand all the dimensions of an experience which is only beginning to be systematically explored. Conflict, psychological and moral, is what much of their work is about. From their descriptions of what concerns their patients, two categories of conflict emerge. First were conflicts clearly related to the shame attached to illicit sex—in other words, the violation of social mores—in terms of which getting pregnant and having an abortion are more punishment than anything else. The second category concerns the abortion itself, quite separate from guilt about the act which resulted in the predicament. As described by counselors, those battles seem much more prone to line up within the patient herself, rather than as an attempt to come to terms with a gap between private practice and public standards of behavior. This makes good sense, since awareness of abortion has been pushed so far back in the public consciousness that moral repulsion from it isn't likely to have been ingrained very deeply in the average American. The rusty coat hanger and the physical fears it conjures up, not the red letter A, is likely to be the strongest socially-ingrained association. (Catholics are an exception, though there, too, the concern is separate since the relevant teaching relates to abortion itself, not illicit sex, which will be listed under a different heading on Judgment Day.)

The two levels of conflict are often mixed up, as one quickly learns sitting in on a counseling session. Very often, for instance, a young woman has gotten pregnant because she was so

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

ambivalent about her violation of sexual mores that she didn't face up to what she was doing and its possible consequences, and therefore didn't use contraception. For the same reason, she doesn't want to face the fact that she is having an abortion or any other evidence of sex and her sexual nature. The most well-defined object of this kind of counseling is to get patients to confront this lapse and to take responsibility for their actions by using adequate contraception in the future. Sometimes the blocks are formidable, condensing into: "I don't need it. I got caught. I'm taking my punishment, and I'm never going to have sex again." A good counselor works hard on such patients as experience indicates their attitude makes them highly prone to getting into the predicament a second time.

Though frequently entangled with the outside influences of sexual mores, making the decision to have an abortion tends to precipitate a woman into an unusually unencumbered confrontation within herself, because being pregnant isolates a person, particularly if she's single and doesn't want to have a child. If you live in a society where bearing an illegitimate child is something to be ashamed of, and where, on the other hand, abortion is illegal, you are suddenly cut off from all the support, advice, information, and facilities which have diluted the immediacy of previous crises in your life. This compounds the isolation which accompanies pregnancy under any circumstances. Whatever you decide to do, you are ultimately alone. As one young patient put it, "Nobody is going to get on that operating table with you." You have to decide for yourself. This is true of any medical procedure one has to go through, but most of them don't present such a serious and complex choice.

No Hold on Her Life

The discomfort with having violated social mores, and a person's consequent ambivalence about her sexual nature in general, if very strong, will probably preclude getting in touch with real self—completely. But insofar as patients do wrestle with questions about abortion itself, their concerns are often cast precisely in this kind of internal frame of reference and therefore can be especially "pure" or "unsocialized." From descriptions, the issue in such cases takes shape not so much in terms of "murder" (though fetal size and characteristics are points of great interest) but of violating one's own maternity (in a very broad sense). Insistence that "I really love children," or "I definitely want to have children," for instance, is a common patient protestation. In other words, the question is often more one of "what am I doing to myself" than consideration of the fetus as an independent entity: the perspective is one from which the fetus is more the fruition of a part of the woman's nature which she values highly and doesn't want to grow calluses over, than it is a creature to be considered separately from herself. Along these lines, it's common for an abortion patient to be in one way deeply pleased at being pregnant, even though the whole business has been a nightmare, even though she definitely doesn't want to bear a child at this point, and fervently wishes the pregnancy had never happened. That contradictory pleasure—surely independent of social mores, independent even of a disastrous, personal predicament—and the fear of frustrating the nature which generates it, is the most explicit expression of irreducible conflict in making the decision to have an abortion which I have come across.

Patients, most of them very young and new to this whole side of themselves, are also not likely to identify their feelings, much less the distinctions I am making here, very clearly. Counselors, however, who usually suffer very little from concern with social mores or aversion to sex, have often thought a lot on this level. "There's a conflict, no question about

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

it, you can't think it away. The best you can do is to face it," said Vicki Simons, head counselor in one of New York's largest clinics. "Many of the counselors had to deal with their feelings about their own abortions all over again when they first started work here. . . . They might not admit it, but I think many have deep feelings of ambivalence about abortion . . . . We've had some counselors who have had to have abortions while working here and it was a crisis in their lives. At a workshop for abortion counselors, many of them said they would not have abortions now, and a majority said that it would be a very very difficult decision for them. . . because they wanted to have children even though it wouldn't fit very well into their lives right then."

I'm not setting up this particular attitude as a norm beyond which lies only abnormality. Some women are genuinely uninterested in bearing children and others may want children but simply have no problem at all with abortion. My point is that many women, who could not possibly be called reactionary, see the personal decision in very serious terms, and that it's significant that among them are people who have been heavily exposed to the experience and have had occasion to think about it especially hard. Secondly, this attitude doesn't weaken the feminist case. Awareness of an irreducible conflict and personal resistance to having an abortion in no way dilutes these peoples' conviction that abortion must be legal and unconditionally accessible. Following them through a day's work lets you know why.

The frame of mind which considers abortion a morally acceptible option yet would lean heavily towards carrying an unexpected pregnancy to term despite grave difficulties depends on a very important factor—a sense of being fundamentally in command of personal destiny so that making way for an unexpected child, however disruptive, is still possible without throwing the mother's life beyond her control. Women in their mid-twenties and older often have developed that stability and, according to observations, they are the ones who are most likely to come to a decision to have an abortion with sorrow and difficulty. The average patient who comes through in her mid-twenties and older often has developed that stability, and, according to observations, she is the one most likely to come to a decision to have an abortion with sorrow and difficulty. The average patient who comes through a clinic is not in this category, however. She is under 20, definitely not in command of her life, and the consequence of bearing a child clearly may mean that she will never gain command.

After getting to know, however slightly, a number of teen-age patients, the insanity of compelling them to give birth crashes through whatever vestiges of doubt one might have harbored. For most of them "getting pregnant" really is an event that somehow happened to them. Not having been brought up to look directly at their own sexuality, they seem to have fallen into it sideways, having looked even less directly at its possible consequences. Abortion counselors talk about how having an abortion can be a positive experience, which sounds a little strange at first, but what they mean is that the experience can be more than an ordeal or even the solution to a particular predicament. It can mean facing a crisis, sorting it out, through the questions that sorting leads one to ask, taking control of one's own life. It can change a person from being menaced and therefore evasive of this whole side of their nature into someone who willingly takes responsibility for what previously was shadowed with threat.

In a lecture at Berkeley, Garrett Hardin, a professor of biology, said, "Critics of abortion generally see it as an exclusively negative thing, a means of nonfulfillment only. What they fail to realize is that abortion, like other means of birth control, can lead to fulfillment in the life of a woman. A

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

woman who aborts this year because she is in poor health, neurotic, economically harassed, unmarried, on the verge of divorce, or immature may well decide to have some other child five years from now—a wanted child. If her need for abortion is frustrated, she may never know the joy of a wanted child."

It Happened to Them

In *It Happens to Us*, a documentary film by Amalie Rothschild on people who have had abortions (legal and illegal), one interview brings this home especially vividly. A young, unmarried couple talk about what they've been through in these terms. The man tells how sex had always been presented to him as something that was going to get him in trouble—before he went on his first date at fourteen, his parents had warned him, "Now don't get her pregnant." The nightmare having finally come true, confronted, and worked out with an abortion, "my attitude towards marriage, having children, and sex have benefited." These things have become matters of choice, he said, not forces of circumstance. Needless to say, it would be preferable to work these problems out beforehand, thereby greatly reducing the chances that an abortion will be needed. But given the predicament, the sanity of solving it with an abortion cannot be denied. As they themselves said, Betsy and her boyfriend have a much better chance of being good parents some day: not people who feel they have been forced into something, and basically blame a child for it, but people who have freely chosen the responsibilities of parenthood. The forces of desperation which involuntary parenthood can create are starkly documented in that victim who inhabits all levels of the social structure in horrifyingly high numbers, the physically battered child.

The Betsys come to the clinics in hordes, hopefully leaving behind the combination of ignorance and evasion which got them into the predicament. Another kind of patient comes less often but with alarming frequency nonetheless. She's younger and would be even more vulnerable to permanent psychic damage if she bore a child. Unlike the 19- or 20-year-old who generally just wants to stop being pregnant as fast as she can, causing the least possible disruption in her life (the straightforward personal crisis attitude seems to come with maturity), the younger teenager often wants desperately to have the baby. Somebody else has pressed her into the abortion. A theory about this phenomenon, advanced in several studies, is that the subconscious reason she got pregnant was that she felt rejected, and sees in the future baby a substitute for herself on which she will lavish the love she herself needs badly. None of this has the remotest connection with what taking care of a child actually entails, and it's through pushing her to face the gulf between her fantasy and what motherhood would really be like for her that she can be led to understand her motivations. As a young girl said in *It Happens to Us*: "Now I know that I don't want a baby until I'm taking care of myself, until I'm fully responsible for myself," an insight many older women have failed to perceive.

Ulterior motivation behind unwanted pregnancies is not limited to teenagers. The complex forces which motivate a woman who does not have room in her life for a child to become lax about contraception, or fail to use it at all when it is available, are only just beginning to be explored. But even the rudimentary knowledge which has been gained reinforces, as in the case of the rejected teenager, the gut sense that prohibiting abortion does violence to sanity, and, on the other hand, that there's a lot more than plumbing involved. A study was made by Lawrence Downs and David Clayson of abortion patients at New York Hospital after the psychiatric department was called in to help a medical staff beset by this new kind

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

of patient who "presented with tremendous emotionality that ran the gamut from extreme sadness, fear, and guilt through various psychotic and 'borderline' conditions to those patients who demonstrated a bizarre euphoria, making a social event of their hospitalization" [Not, in other words, your average tonsillectomy patients]. Several characteristics distinguished the test group from the population at large. Sixty-six per cent of them recently had suffered either some kind of traumatic separtion, such as termination of a marriage, or a death, recent or anticipated, in the immediate family. Fifty-one per cent had either felt disturbed enough to seek psychiatric help around the period when they conceived, or habitually used hard drugs or tranquilizers. Eighty-five per cent suffered from at least one of these situations. Other patterns emerged, such as a high incidence of women coping with unstable love relationships in which they were extremely dependent. Thirty-seven per cent had been recently troubled by a gynecological abnormality, and more than half of these thought they might be infertile. Seven per cent of the patients were teenagers whose mothers had recently had hysterectomies. The study opens only the tiniest chink towards truly understanding what might be going on in our heads when we ill-advisedly get ourselves pregnant. The glimmer that comes through, however, not only suggests that the points in our life when we make that mistake are likely to be the points when we are least able to cope with a child, but that the pregnancy is likely to be tied up with deep feelings about life, death, and generativity which would have to be dealt with in any healthy decision to end or go ahead with it.

An Aborted Calvinist

Of all the counterarguments made by Right to Lifers, one reaches me with force. You cannot, they say, use social utility as the ultimate criterion in matters which involve life and death and essential liberties. There is one point on which abortion proponents switch from focusing entirely on the mother, take the fetus as a separate entity, and talk about its right not to be subjected to the misery which it is likely to suffer if born unwanted, and here, I think, they get into very deep water. While a huge proportion of the unhappy lives, and a whole network of social ills can most likely be traced to a common condition, the unwanted child, when you start arguing that the person a fetus is going to become should not exist because he or she will be unhappy and/or will be a trouble to society—because they will be damaged goods—I bale out. Most of us would rather be alive than not, even if being alive also means being deformed, battered, half-crazy, or poor.

In *Abortion Rap* by Florence Kennedy and Dianne Schulder, Rabbi David Feldman's testimony in a federal suit challenging the constitutionality of New York's pre-1970 abortion laws is quoted. He makes the distinction between the two ways of thinking very clear: ". . . if the woman were to say that she had taken thalidomide during pregnancy (and the chances of a risk of deformity are very great) and she wanted an abortion, because a deformed life is not very good, the Rabbi would dismiss such talk of the future on grounds of 'Well, you don't know what's going to be, whether the child is going to be deformed and whether being deformed is worse or better than not being born.'

"But if the same woman were to phrase the question differently and say that 'the possibility of deformity is driving me to anguish or distraction' then the Rabbi would say: 'Well, now, you're talking about someone who is here and alive and real and all of Jewish tradition says. . . if a woman asks for compassion in that respect, then she is entitled to it.' "

The distinction may seem like a philosophical nicety, but to me if the answer to the two ways of asking the

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

question were "Have an abortion," the difference between those two ostensibly identical answers is a matter of opening the door to a utilitarianism in which the human life is reduced to the value of a machine—how well does it work.

I'm not suggesting that abortion should be accessible to women on a basis of how they answer questions. But these considerations are crucial as we build a case for, and tradition around, abortion, because how we think about its function and the function of other medical advances which introduce previously unimagined subtleties about the borderlines of life, is going to determine in the end how we think about all life.

Rabbi Feldman also said, "One thing emerges from the writings of all rabbis. . . that the welfare of the woman is primary, and that welfare, of course, is not limited to saving of life, but even to saving of mental health and to saving of welfare. It might even be extended to saving her the anguish of shame or embarrassment." Later he quotes a 19th century Hungarian rabbi: "No woman is required to build the world by destroying herself." An understanding of pregnancy, wanted and unwanted, and what it means for a woman to decide whether to go through with it or not, is the proper ground on which to base a case for abortion—not the social value of unwanted children, over-population, or any other overview which is based on conjecture of whether or not the growth of the fetus into a human being ought or ought not to be canceled. Aside from opening the door to an abhorrent utilitarianism, such arguments lead as surely as the Right to Lifer position into an intolerable intrusion into the privacy of woman's choice in matters of maternity.

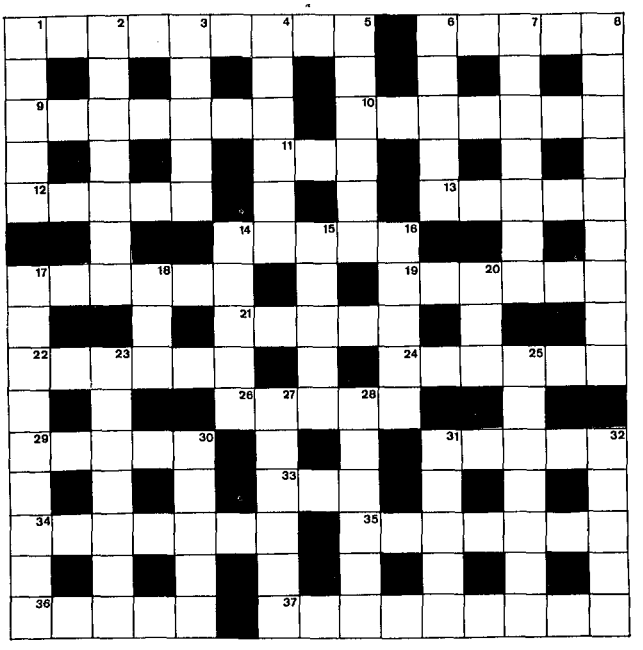
The hypocrisy this civilization has managed to maintain in its attitude towards unwanted pregnancies is unmatched. From the homes for unwed mothers where the inmates have pressed upon them first of all the importance of secrecy—the child will be whisked away at birth and lucky-lucky you will be able to resume life as though nothing had happened—to the gynecologists who refuse to help a woman who comes to them to get an abortion, yet tells her to come back when it's all over for a checkup, the social duplicity about this age-old, widespread, and drastic predicament is astounding. No less mystifying has been the silence of women; the fact that no bond grew between the millions who journeyed either into those treacherous regions of undefined conscience, illegality, and physical risk, or through the traumatic experience of bearing a child and giving it up. Now that it's all out in the open at last, we are faced with building new attitudes and principles which integrate this experience honestly into the social picture almost from scratch.

The centuries of acquiescence by women to the old attitudes, demonstrate that we can dupe ourselves into believing almost anything: it would be sad indeed if in the process of rejecting the notion that abortion is something to be guilty about we substituted the equally unstraightforward mindset that it is something that shouldn't entail any feelings at all. Should I have a daughter, I want a world for her in which abortion is as available to her as a tonsillectomy. But I don't want her to grow up in an atmosphere which propels her into aborting an unwanted pregnancy without considering it a matter for deep and careful thought. To make that reflection truly free of social pressure, I also want the option of having the child, and the help and care she would need, openly presented to her and considered a respected and a viable alternative in the society she lives in. I hope she will reflect, not because I'm a Calvinist and want her to suffer where, if left alone, she would feel perfectly unconcerned about an abortion, but because I think she would otherwise be closing off to a part of herself if she didn't. Women have been closed off to themselves for too long.■

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

The Political Puzzle

by John Barclay



ACROSS

1. He was no vote loser! (9)
6. Quadrennial search for stove. (5)
9. Trashmen are mostly songs. (7)
10. Keep Pennsylvania guest out of sight. (7)
11. We know what limb Mel is out on. (3)
12. Something fishy about this tutor. (5)
13. They hate nothing on this lake. (5)
14. Tips to the end of New Orleans. (5)
17. It led Peg to the flag. (6)
19. These can be dark or saw. (6)
21. Of America, his master's? (5)
22. Davies goes with consent. (6)
24. Candidate to come down hard. (6)
26. A strong alloy. (5)
29. The last word in elfin allegiance. (5)
31. Phase II leaves us in this state. (5)
33. Marijuana goes back to head. (3)
34. Man in irons is music-maker. (7)
35. Decoration makes one angrier. (7)
36. Put New York back in grass for conference. (5)
37. Even a warted log attracted some votes. (9)

DOWN

1. Get a broken crate to bounce back. (5)
2. Power play to get you to veto bill. (7)
3. To select headless a leader. (5)
4. Early sect found in business enemy. (6)
5. In 1948 it was tuna. Mister! (6)
6. It is five years since he stayed with us. (5)
7. Makes the case for new math. (7)
8. Candidate who never put seven nots in one sentence. (9)
14. Up or down it stays the same. (5)
15. There's friendship between origami types. (5)
16. What Hell's bells are made of? (5)
17. Political programs from storm and flap. (9)
18. Miss Dix is 511 years out of date. (3)
20. These come first with the man who comes first. (3)
23. Could be an oven sin to cook this. (7)
25. "Who raids it?" sounds like big question for this writer. (7)
27. Take the ingot with you for a picnic. (6)
28. Seek more from applause without us. (6)
30. Hog fat with me in middle makes cabinet officer. (5)
31. A hat, a vote or a berry. (5)
32. Quite ready to agree. (5)

The numbers indicate the number of letters and words, e.g., (2, 3) means a two-letter word followed by a three-letter word. Groups of letters, e.g., USA, are treated as one word.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Prisoners of War, Prisoners of Peace

by Taylor Branch

On May 5, the families of the American soldiers missing or held prisoner in Indochina gathered in a large basement room of the Marriott motel, across the highway from the Pentagon, to debate the war. As the political controversy over Vietnam continued to be honed down almost to a dispute over the best way to secure the release of the prisoners, the families of those prisoners, ironically, held a national "Where Do We Go From Here?" meeting to argue strategy regarding the war itself, the big picture, with an eye on the election. The weekend event had the earmarks of any Washington convention—the panelists fumbling with water glasses, caucuses, plenary sessions, boredom, the lame but necessary jokes of the genial moderator (in this case, Louis Stockstill, a former Pentagon flak and *Reader's Digest* author), lunch breaks, shop talk, and dinner speakers—but the meeting's purpose and its people, the collected flesh relatives of the endless names on the Defense Department's prisoner and missing lists, gave the Marriott basement a macabre atmosphere.

It was a conference of bouffants and beehives, elderly couples, military wives, Elks, and church-goers—on the whole, people who could never become alienated from their positive view of the military or from their staunch patriotism. It was a critical cross-section of mainstream Americans, united by the fact that the war is an intensely personal issue with them, having weighed like a stone every day for years. They epitomized what doves have called responsible citizens on the war—people who have lived and breathed the arguments and books on Vietnam, studying, measuring the continuation of the war against their own future sacrifices, measuring withdrawal against their past sacrifices, their pain against the flag, the war's trumpets and ideals against its doubts and its blood. For most of the relatives, it was a bitter

Taylor Branch is an editor of The Washington Monthly.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

but genuine struggle. President Nixon could have snapped almost everyone to a salute any time by entering with a military escort and a Marine band, but he wasn't there, and surprisingly sharp divisions about the war existed alongside the unifying feeling that its burdens were in everyone's throat.

The relatives approached the POW issue from almost every conceivable psychological state and political angle. Some held tenaciously to a simple article of faith—in the benevolent wisdom of the President, in the power of prayer vigils, in the ability of an unshackled military to cut through the diplomatic paste to get real action—while others waded into the various alleyways of peace analysis or into how the President's peace strategy depends on the monsoon rains hitting the Central Highlands by June 10 to shore up this or that ARVN division. These views often clashed head-on, and the room cracked with a tension overload when one relative stood up and said in a quivering voice that the dovish thoughts of the military wife in the next chair were keeping the POWs locked up by dividing the country and thereby prolonging the war, or when a distraught, dovish old POW father charged that Administration supporters were buying time for the President to keep bombing and that the super-patriots were actually opportunists "crawling into White House favor up the backs of your own POWs."

It's Not Easy to Talk

Despite the importance of the POWs to the election this year, the meeting of the families was hardly covered by the press, apparently because their image as patsies for the Administration had driven the media away in boredom. But I found this image highly misleading—the families may have looked like Nixonettes and Legionnaires, but there was a raging tempest within the group of 2,700 relatives (about 400 of whom journeyed to Washington for the meeting), organized as the National League of Families of Prisoners and Missing in Southeast Asia.

Joan Vinson was a tip-off that stereotypes of the League are off base. She is from Tupelo, Mississippi, the wife of an Air Force colonel and West Point graduate missing in action (MIA) over North Vietnam since April, 1968. Her social life centers around her husband's former colleagues, who are high Air Force officers, with a sprinkling of generals by now. She has been a moving force in the League since its inception in 1970, and served as its national coordinator in 1970-71. Yet despite all the credentials of a classic hawk, Joan Vinson stood out in the corridor, a bit aloof from the meeting. "I'm getting very cynical," she said, "and I never thought I would. We've been through all this for so long now that it's hard to think it matters. We get up little spurts of hope every time it looks like something's going to happen to get this over with, but it's hard even to feel that any more. We have had meetings with Kissinger from the beginning. He said, 'Give us six more months. Our books will be open and you will see that we have done everything we could.' But it's hard to see anything in Vietnamization for the prisoners. You know, in a way we're in danger of becoming very selfish, and it's not right. I don't want the prisoners to be the reason for withdrawing from the war. I'm afraid there'll be a backlash against them from the doves who think they're the reason the war doesn't end. Or maybe one from the hawks, who think we're abandoning Vietnam because of the POWs. We've got to end the war regardless of the prisoners and then do the best we can to get them back. As it is now, it's not easy to talk to the North Vietnamese about the treatment of POWs because of all the devastation we're causing in their country."

Marsha Schoeffel, the elderly wife of a retired Navy admiral, also said that we should not withdraw just for

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

the sake of the prisoners, even for her son, Navy Commander Peter Schoeffel, who was shot down on October 4, 1967. But her thoughts ran in the opposite direction of Joan Vinson's. "I can't believe that we can leave the South Vietnamese," she said sorrowfully. "If that's done, then every one of these lives and these sacrifices is meaningless, absolutely meaningless."

Marsha Schoeffel has hung on out of pride for her son. "My son was shot down on his 186th combat mission," she said, "and he made 600 landings on the *Intrepid* in his F-4, 100 at night. His whole purpose was to be a Naval aviator. He had to exercise his eyes 15 minutes a day for over 10 years to get in the pilot program. Now Peter's been a communist prisoner for four-and-a-half years, and his morale has been superb. That's kept me out of the hospital. You know, we should have really gone in there and cleaned this war up and gotten out. I think my son was shot down by anti-aircraft that was put in during one of those bombing halts."

"You're right, Mom. I think this country is losing its guts," added Peter's sister bitterly and matter-of-factly, as if she had said it many times before. "And I think the majority of the POWs would rather be dead than red. We would certainly rather be dead than red, and so we don't want to get the POWs back by surrender."

"The communal living of the North Vietnamese is religiously correct," concluded the mother, crying thoughtfully, "but morally wrong in its imposition on other people. I really don't think the South Vietnamese are worth the powder to blow them up with, but we are up against communism."

Most of the relatives are not as selfless about the prisoners as Joan Vinson or Marsha Schoeffel, but their thoughts collided in taut, strained exchanges—with dearly-held principles coming from seemingly the wrong kinds of people in unexpected, odd combinations. The effect was baroque and often absurd.

OSS

The SECRET History of America's First Central Intelligence Agency

R. Harris Smith

What did Stewart Alsop, John Birch, David Bruce, Julia Child, Allen Dulles, John Gardner, Arthur Goldberg, Charles Hitch, Herbert Marcuse, Walt Rostow, and Arthur Schlesinger, Jr. have in common? They were all members of the OSS.

"Mr. Smith's lively and objective account brings to life the mixture of intelligence, bravery, creativity, confusion, corruption, monarchism, communism and sheer zaniness in Wild Bill Donovan's circus."
—**Arthur Schlesinger, Jr.**

"This is a readable and entertaining book on that astonishing wartime organization, the Office of Strategic Services."—**Stewart Alsop**

"Vividly portrays an important feature of America's democratic martial spirit at its best and worst—exemplified by the most brilliant team of amateur enthusiasts the nation ever assembled in wartime. A delight to read."—**Paul Seabury**

"A rich file of facts, vignettes, and who was who in the OSS, the chief intelligence agency during World War II."—**Kirkus Reviews**

"Unquestionably the best history of the OSS ever written . . . is also a fascinating study of politics and people, intrigue and imagination, accident and adventure."
—**Thomas Braden**

$10.95

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA PRESS
Berkeley • Los Angeles • New York

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Admirals and *Catch 22*

Jane Denton, whose husband has been a prisoner in North Vietnam for seven years, touched off the fireworks at one point when she went to a floor mike to offer a resolution from the Virginia delegation of POW-MIA families. A very troubled, likable, intelligent woman, she wore red, white, and blue, with a Navy anchor emblem, and spoke with an almost lyrical Mobile, Alabama/Tidewater Virginia accent. She surprised the audience when she began reading her resolution: "Mr. President, in this election year, we remember your promise to end the Vietnam war and bring the prisoners home. We will hold you accountable for that promise, and we will remind the people of your failure thus far. . . ."

"That resolution is aiding and abetting the enemy," shouted Joe McCain, bolting from his chair. As bearded and intense-looking as any SDS campus theoretician, he is the brother of a POW and the son of Admiral John McCain, commander of the Pacific fleet. McCain jumped up all weekend, sometimes with conciliatory, politic words for the doves, but usually to issue a denunciation of the North Vietnamese. He was nearly obsessed by the evidence that Hanoi's POW list is not complete, and he advocated publicity campaigns of the Ross Perot variety to bring the pressure of world opinion down on the enemy. (One of his achievements was to obtain League sponsorship for the flight of two old B-25's from the West Coast to Washington to carry tons of mail for Congress on the POW identification problem. "The Speaker of the House and other dignitaries will hold a press conference to receive the mail," he declared. "Eastern Air Lines is donating the oil, and Shell is donating the gas. And the two most famous stunt pilots in the world will fly the planes. One of them flew through a billboard in *Around the World in 80 Days.* The other one flew over live flak in *Catch* 22.")

"I resent the implication that I'm aiding and abetting the enemy," said Jane Denton, very much taken aback. A brief argument ensued, with McCain applauding the renewed bombing, while the dignified Navy wife, a weekend house guest of Chief of Staff Elmo Zumwalt, seemed hurt that her patriotism had been challenged. The life quickly ebbed from the dispute between the admiral's son and the admiral's guest, as the difference between the two kinds of treason—of undermining the Commander during a war, or of paying respect to the bombing through silence—came to seem minor, almost a simple question of tactics. It looked as if ending the war would require one kind of treason or the other, and many of the families weaved back and forth almost daily. The Denton resolution failed by a narrow margin.

"With feelings running so high, I think it's remarkable that we get along as well as we do," said Frances Ford, a POW mother. "In the North and South war, there were brothers on opposite sides, and we're the same way. The only thing that gets me a little is when they say we're traitors if we don't support the President. I'm D.A.R. on both sides of the family, and I'm 100-per-cent American. But I don't support the President because he's buying time with us. I think this war's being fought for the upper crust."

Over the Years

The extent of the conflict among the families was surprising in itself, but after only a few hours at the convention, what kept pounding home was that the people who commanded your respect were still adrift on the war in the sense of being troubled by their position, hawk or dove. Because they have been chained to the war through their men for so long, it seemed almost essential that they would have adopted some simplifying assumptions—that they would have made some leaps of faith to resolve

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

their doubts. But they didn't. What you saw in a woman like Jane Denton was an anguished dove, a crucible in which the best motives for our original involvement in Vietnam were still being seared and tested by the arrogance of the killing. There were hawks like that, too, and in neither case was there a sense of release or of moral certainty. Those who recited dove or hawk scripture seemed sadly out of touch for some reason, almost pathetic. I had felt more and more certain in my opposition to the war over the years, and this impression rocked me.

Not all the relatives seemed ennobled by their ordeal, of course. After several years of the POW pressure cooker, there were people who have been driven to the shrink's couch, people reduced to numbness, war freaks, and even some in whom grief had rotted into opportunism. "Look here," said one POW wife after a few drinks, "the first thing you've got to understand about this is that the prisoners are not supermen and we're not superwomen. We're just like everybody else, and a lot of these marriages weren't so great even before the men went over there. See that woman over there," she asked, pointing to a blonde who was bouncing around with the conciliatory enthusiasm of a Jaycee booster. "Her husband is a captain, and she wants him to be an admiral. The men are still up for promotion while they're prisoners, and we live off their rank in a lot of ways. There's a temptation to politick for promotion by trying to please the Pentagon. Not many do it, but some." The money problem is especially tough on the wives of the 1,100 MIAs, the vast majority of whom will no doubt be classified as dead when the war ends and they don't turn up in prison camps. "I live off my husband's normal salary now, just like he had never left," said a missing officer's wife, "but when the war ends and my husband is presumed dead, which I think will happen, I start living off his pension. It's less than half as much, much less. Things like that creep into your head over the years and make you feel even worse."

Hope is much more difficult for the MIA families than for the POW relatives, who know from the letters they get that there will be a reunion when the war ends. The MIA wives tended to be more hawkish, perhaps because they felt sure they had already made their sacrifice and wanted it to count for something—something that withdrawal couldn't bring. "I was an MIA wife for two years, and I have been a POW wife for two more," said Jean Crumpler, "and being an MIA is so much harder. You have no status. You're not single, not married, not a widow, and you know that the chances of an MIA are pretty slim. In a strange way, you subconsciously don't want to face a settlement, because you are so sure how it will end. That's why there is a tendency to say that the President has done everything possible to end the war." When the North Vietnamese say they have no prisoners other than the 339 on their official list, and the Pentagon counters

back issues

For readers and libraries who wish to purchase back issues of **The Washington Monthly,** the following are available at $1.00 each:

1969	**June**	**1971**	**all months**
	July		***except:***
	September		**January**
	October		**February**
1970	**June**		**March**
	October	**1972**	**all months**
	November		***except:***
	December		**March**

Send $1.00 for each copy to:

Back Issues
The Washington Monthly
1150 Connecticut Ave. N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20036

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

by saying there are more prisoners and that the ruthless enemy is concealing some, it is nearly irresistible for each MIA wife to believe that *her* husband might be a concealed prisoner. "Who would you want to believe?" asked one.

During meals and informal gatherings all weekend, the relatives seemed to cluster less according to politics than to the status of the men. The MIA families would come together to exchange the shreds of evidence they had that their men are alive, or to discuss the legal problems involved in selling property listed in an MIA's name, or to consult about how to handle the children. Mrs. Mark Stephenson said that her husband's wingman saw a parachute open when her husband's plane was shot down over North Vietnam in April, 1967. No word has been heard of him since. "That parachute's good enough for me," said Mrs. Stephenson. "You have faith, especially with a pilot like Mark. He's the best. He started preparing me for this kind of thing when we first got married. He would say, 'It may take me a while, but I'll come home.' You know, I enjoy being an Air Force wife. I don't look forward to moving off the base when Mark retires."

The families of the known POWs talked a lot about the treatment of their men, and about the mail and packages Hanoi allows the prisoners to receive from time to time. (Most of the mail goes through the Committee of Liaison, a New York group headed by peace activists Cora Weiss and David Dellinger. The committee is thoroughly disliked by most of the families, who resent its close relationship with Hanoi and its end-the-war message, but it is the best source of mail and the families put up with it.) "I don't think my husband gets nearly all the letters I send," said Jane Denton wearily. "On those little five-line letters the North Vietnamese let him write, he still asks me whether the children have started college. I've written him about that a dozen times. My Lord, they're almost out of college."

As pilots in the air have become the key to the American terms of war in Indochina, it is fitting that the pilots shot out of the air have become the heart of the terms for peace. The President has said repeatedly that we will not leave until all U. S. prisoners are returned and the missing accounted for.

It seems that an awesome amount of war is being fought over what the Pentagon counts as about 500 POWs and 1,100 MIAs. (Hanoi says it holds 339 prisoners, a hotly disputed figure, and there are about 100 more in South Vietnam and Laos.) Sixteen hundred men, a tiny fraction of the casualties of the war's purpose, have now become *the war's purpose. Such elevation of the prisoner issue is inconceivable in the context of most previous wars. If the Nazis had threatened to execute or hide away their Allied POWs unless Eisenhower halted the invasion of Germany, our belief in that war would have allowed us to write off the POWs if necessary, and we would have continued the invasion with pain but with conviction. Now, the North Vietnamese are using the POWs for leverage, and it is precisely because the country does* not *believe in the war that we cling to the POWs. The pain of abandoning a prisoner rises as belief in the war falls. You cannot write them off for nothing, so you make more in spite of yourself. Between March 11 and June 24 of this year, 137 new Americans were reported missing or captured. This is more than were lost during the entire first year of the Rolling Thunder bombing campaign in 1965.*

The POWs remain incarcerated in such places as the "Hanoi Hilton," an old French prison built to shackle Vietnamese rebels against Paris colonialism, and now used by those very rebels to hold some of the Americans who have succeeded the French as their enemy. This will be the third presidential election in captivity for some of the pilots, and most of them have missed at least two or three

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

congressional elections. "My brother wanted to be an astronaut," said Robert Brudno, "so he went into the Air Force from MIT to become a test pilot and hopefully to get in the space program. He had no opinion on the war at all when he was sent over." Prisoner Brudno, straight out of the era when students idolized astronauts, was shot down in February of 1965 and has been frozen in time ever since—a fresh memory when Martin Luther King and a heroic LBJ congratulated each other at the signing of the Voting Rights Act, a fuzzier memory nearly four years later when Nixon was elected, or nearly five years later when the Mets won their first pennant. Now, after seven and a half years, he is almost a figure of history, even to his familiy.

The return of Captain Brudno is the only American war aim that the Nixon Administration feels comfortable talking about in public. You can find older, crustier goals if you look for them, such as independence for South Vietnam; but they are in the closet, and from all the talk and the press releases you would think we are bombing and blockading just to get the North Vietnamese to show signs that they will give the men back.

No More Cashew Nuts

On Saturday evening, May 6, the POW-MIA families assembled anxiously to hear from the Nixon Administration, represented by Dolf Droge of Henry Kissinger's staff. He was considered a come-down from the League's September, 1971 annual meeting, which President Nixon and Secretary Melvin Laird had attended in full plumage, but Droge was authorized to speak for the Administration. He faced a disgruntled audience, divided almost equally between frustrated Administration backers and frustrated people who had made their break. He is a classy, articulate showman—very tall and lanky, dressed in a smart suit and leather boots, with long and stylish hair, looking and coming off a little like the Galloping Gourmet. He sat casually on the front table and reached with his pointer to the large map of Indochina behind him, illustrating various strategic situations almost without looking. Saddled with the task of explaining to the POW families why they must wait, he began by demonstrating his knowledge of Vietnam—spewing out figures on the number of independent cities, the names of ARVN division commanders, the vagaries of the weather in the Central Highlands, and the performance of the South Vietnamese army in the current offensive as compared with Tet in 1968.

"The test of Vietnamization is now," said Droge, digging in for a long night. "Our residual force will remain in South Vietnam solely for the purpose of obtaining the return of the POWs. The only other reason was to prepare the South Vietnamese for battle, but that has already passed because the test is here and they are fighting. . . .

"The President came into office in 1969 and said to the North Vietnamese, 'OK, negotiate me out.' And the North Vietnamese turned him down. We could have gotten out. We would have had to, and I think the North could have had the South by now. . . .

"The North Vietnamese view the prisoners as a ransom, and they are playing military cards, testing the South Vietnamese. They are trying the military route, and if they fail they will come back to the negotiating table. . . .You get the POWs back by going to the North Vietnamese at the table after beating them on the battlefield."

The Administration's supporters seemed a little restless with this position, which placed such heavy reliance on the South Vietnamese and which was so conciliatory in its peace terms. A man at the front of the room brought them alive by proposing to unleash all air and naval power against the North Vietnamese to force them to give back the POWs. About half the

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

audience applauded thunderously, but Droge had to duck around the proposal.

Then a little woman approached a microphone in the back. "I come from Brooklyn, and I pray for peace," she said trembling. "We cannot drop any more bombs on those people over there while we are asking for the POWs. Please take my message back to the President."

More thunderous applause. "I will support any demonstration for peace that has a sign saying 'U. S., Get Out of South Vietnam!' as long as the other side says 'Hanoi, Get Out of South Vietnam!' " Droge said. His voice began to rise toward a shout for the first time, "Two wrongs don't make a right, but it takes two sides to end a war!" The house came down, with a broad cross-section of applause.

"If you could get the men back as you say, by withdrawing, then no one would argue with you," Droge concluded. "But Hanoi has said that they will not give back the POWs unless we overthrow the South Vietnamese government. The North has said no. Withdrawal is not enough."

"So what can we do then?" asked one of the wives, apparently frustrated that the North Vietnamese are rejecting a more dovish position than the Administration had ever offered.

"I would do everything I could to make the POWs the main cultural and social issue in the United States," said Droge. "The American people have not really shown that they care about Red Cross inspection of the prison camps. People have tried to get the last step, release, before crossing the near step of getting the Red Cross in there. Where are the songs, the plays, the movies, and the cultural displays that show that the American people care? You can't do it by government. The people have to do it. North Vietnam knows that the concern has not been from the people doing it so far. It has been the Administration doing it."

Audible whispers of anger rustled through the crowd. This was obviously not what the families wanted to hear—that their best bet is to drum up more theatrics in the grass roots to get better treatment for the men. "I'm not going to ask another person to write a letter to Hanoi," Charlotte Christian, wife of a five-year POW, said privately. "I don't want any more commemorative stamps or memorial trees planted, and it doesn't really matter whether I can send an extra 69-cent can of cashew nuts in his package of powdered milk. I want my husband home." Droge went on into the night, but the crowd thinned, with many sad and angry looks in the hallways.

By midnight, the audience was reduced to about 75 of the more conservative family members, and Droge began to regain his form. His earlier performance had pleased neither the hawks nor the doves—the doves because they either didn't believe his generous peace terms or were frustrated by their failure to produce, the hawks because they didn't like the terms themselves or because there was so little patriotic rhetoric to march with. Droge began to serve up phrases that were more pleasing to the holdouts. "I think that the prisoners will want to end the war with the consequences for South Vietnam in mind. They know what total surrender would mean. They know how many people were killed after the communists took over the North. . . . Hanoi is the dishpan. Moscow and Peking are the faucets. . . ."

"I think the others should have heard this, Mr. Droge," said one grateful POW wife who had been pressing for a policy of bombing the dikes north of Hanoi. "My husband would rather die in a bombing raid than to rot in a no-win, no-lose war. He would want to have given everything to something he believed in."

At about 1:30 in the morning, with some 30 stalwarts marveling at the speaker's stamina, a woman summed it up emphatically: "We want our men, and we want an independent South Vietnam."

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

"I want those things, too," said Droge. "And believe me, you're closer to getting your men back now than you ever have been before."

Zumwalt's Shot in the Arm

The National League of Families met on Sunday morning in its final business session to take action on the resolutions developed in the Saturday caucuses. The old battles continued over whether it is unpatriotic not to support the President or foolish to do so. A resolution passed unanimously to call upon all presidential candidates to place trade embargoes on all nations doing business with North Vietnam if the POWs are not released before the election. Another resolution called for the League to support the President in his efforts to obtain the release of the POWs and an accounting of the MIAs. There was heated debate. "If you pass a resolution supporting the President," said an opponent, "we will just be stamped pro-Administration again." "We are not supporting him in the war," came the reply. "We are supporting unity in his efforts to get the POWs back. We are in a moment of crisis, and we are doing what we're supposed to do." This one passed by only five votes. In a striking reversal, another resolution passed declaring the Vietnamization policy to be a failure as a means to end the war and obtain the return of the prisoners.

In the midst of these flip-flopping resolutions, a heavily-medaled admiral strode to the platform in a surprise visit. It was Admiral Elmo Zumwalt, who stood congenially but authoritatively at the podium receiving the applause of the startled relatives, looking a lot like the President himself with John L. Lewis eyebrows. The audience rose. At last, somebody looked as if he could guide us out of this wilderness with his strong voice and his command and his power.

"I know I'm not supposed to be here, but I decided to come anyway," he began, smiling. "We had Sybil Stockdale and Jane Denton staying with us, and I got a feeling of discontent at breakfast this morning. . . ."

"He's gonna pacify us now," whispered a middle-aged woman in the back, giggling.

The Admiral's speech was serious and optimistic, firm to the enemy and yet warm to the families, going over essentially the same ground that Droge had covered the night before. He repeated his central message at the end, when asked how he planned to get the POWs back: "If there's one thing I'm confident of, it's that even if we pulled out, dumped Thieu, and turned over the South Vietnamese, the North Vietnamese still would not give the prisoners back. They would just give us another demand. The only time they will negotiate is when they have no alternative. My own feeling is that the worst possible prospect for getting the POWs back would be if South Vietnam fell, and that the best prospect for getting the prisoners back would come if we blunted the North Vietnamese offensive and left them with no alternative other than negotiation."

While the Admiral acknowledged the clapping, a POW wife rushed to the microphone: "I think we needed a shot in the arm, Admiral, and you sure gave it to us."

Zumwalt exited to a standing ovation about 25 minutes after the Vietnamization failure measure had passed, and the conference resumed the resolution business. You could feel a great magnet of hope from the Admiral, and it lingered through a few get-tough resolutions, but the debate and the bitter division resurfaced.

From the beginning, the POWs have been considered a weapon for the hawks—sympathy for them has been associated with love-it-or-leave-it stickers, and the kind of patriotism that keeps the war going. The Nixon Administration "went public" on the POW issue in 1969, when Secretary Laird held a press conference for Navy Lieutenant Robert Frishman, the last

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

of nine POWs released by North Vietnam, at which Frishman detailed the barbaric treatment he had witnessed in the prison camps. (He later retracted some of the more gruesome stories.) The New York Times *reported: "Lt. Frishman said the prisoners could watch American bombing flights, which were 'real morale boosters,' from their quarters. He said that after the bombings stopped, prisoners' spirits declined."*

From the Ross Perot missions and the "Write Hanoi" extravaganzas to the Son Tay raid, the Administration has gained the upper hand in the POW issue by exhibiting simple concern, or, as Laird said of Son Tay, "showing that we care"—showing Hanoi, showing the American people, showing the voters, showing the armed forces, showing the POWs. In some ways, it is remarkable that expressions of sympathy have been sufficient to gain a reputation as the POWs' champion, inasmuch as the Administration's record on prisoners has, like the Son Tay raid, been long on sympathy and highly questionable, if not adverse, on results. Consider a brief summary of the record.

In early 1969, the Nixon Administration reversed LBJ's policy of silence about POWs—a policy that had been based on the traditional idea that North Vietnam would not release the prisoners until the end of the war, anyway, and that public outcry would only increase their hostage value. As astronaut Frank Borman told the Congress after President Nixon sent him on a world tour to talk up the POWs, "I think that one of the unfortunate aspects of the mobilization of public opinion. . . is that everything we do really reinforces the fact that they are an asset from our standpoint, that we do care about these men, that they have value to us." When Secretary Laird went public on the issue of prisoner treatment, Administration officials said they didn't want to detail bad treatment of the POWs for fear that it might irritate Hanoi enough to hold up their release. Soon, however, the Administration was using POWs to make highly publicized allegations of bad treatment, and Hanoi promptly stopped the sporadic "good will" releases. The North Vietnamese also vehemently protested that the Pentagon was using some of the freed POWs to train more pilots for the bombing campaign. Meanwhile, according to Seymour Hersh, the Air Force wrote POW families that they shouldn't be too disturbed about all the torture material being fed to the media "if you keep in mind the purpose for which it was tailored."

By 1970, the hoopla was in full gear, with Perot, Bing Crosby, Bob Hope, Frank Borman, and others flying all over the world. The Administration encouraged and assisted the formation of the League of Families, allowing the families to speak out for the first time. The perils of doing so had been so thoroughly drilled into them that many of them found it hard to accept the policy switch. "The first meeting I went to, I literally wore sunglasses like a movie star," said Jane Denton. "I didn't want to be recognized, because I was still afraid they might take reprisals against my husband in Hanoi." In addition to the publicity barrage, the Administration tantalized the families with its proposals for an immediate prisoner exchange, independent of the war or the negotiations, even though almost all officials who have been involved with the war have always believed that Hanoi will never release American POWs in advance of a settlement.

The Administration scored heavily with its denunciations of the North Vietnamese for not allowing Red Cross inspection of the POW camps. In defense, the leadership in Hanoi points to a special reservation in the North Vietnamese accession to the Geneva Convention stating that "war criminals" have no inspection rights. There is obviously strong feeling in Hanoi that the pilots are in fact war criminals—intervening in a war among the Vietnamese, dropping "smart bombs" on the population of a coun-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

try that doesn't bomb the United States—but the North Vietnamese also have political and strategic reasons for refusing international inspection. They fear that regular visits by Red Cross teams would pinpoint the exact locations of the POW camps for U. S. intelligence. This would make them vulnerable to more widespread bombing because the U. S. would no longer have to worry about hitting its own POWs, and it would also make more Son Tay raids possible. If the torture allegations and the bombing and the use of released POWs to train pilots had not already severed hopes for inspection or more prisoner releases, the Son Tay raid definitely did so. But, according to Laird, the raid raised morale on every front.

The expressions of concern hit home with the public and the prisoner families, despite their lack of effectiveness—and also despite their eerie inappropriateness, which is striking when you see that most of the ceremonies and salutes to the men are the same ones that would be held if they were dead. Florida builds a memorial to its POWs in a cemetery. The Vice President lights a special star on the top of the White House Christmas tree. The Post Office issues a commemorative stamp. As with slain soldiers, the atmosphere hints that there is nothing to be done, that the problem is not one to be solved but to be endured by huddling together. This, of course, is true if you assume that there is no way, or no acceptable way, to get the prisoners back. But if you assume that Hanoi would return the prisoners upon our total withdrawal, then the ceremonies seem deceptive and out of place. Deceptive because they do not openly acknowledge that our daily choice helps keep the men there, not fate. Out of place because they abandon the problem to the past tense, like a surgeon who stops to eulogize a live patient during an operation.

I think the Administration officials I saw are genuinely concerned about the POWs and their families, who have been "their" people. The suffering is nevertheless not fully honest. No Nixon representative told the POW families bluntly that the prisoners would almost certainly be released only at the end of the war, and that the war is not ended because we still believe in it too much to accept Hanoi's terms for peace. Instead, they skipped directly to the next logical step—to the sympathy and the praise. "You and your men have given great sacrifices for your country, and I'm proud to be among you," said Dolf Droge. The hawks, who are smart enough to know that they are "caught between our men and our patriotism," silently acknowledge that this is the only possible attitude, the best salve for their frustrations.

Only very gradually did the effects of the President's policies eat through the solid block of good will the Administration had built up with its special luncheons, honor guards, and other expressions of sympathy for the men and their families. "It took us a long time to realize that there is nothing in Vietnamization for the prisoners," said Jean Crumpler, a four-year POW wife.

Many prisoner families still don't agree, of course, but there is now some doubt as to where the center of gravity lies, some chance even that the Administration might have created a salient public issue that will backfire. The POWs have provided the doves with a semblance of a legitimate war aim—end the war to get the POWs back. Moreover, the prisoners are, for many voters, the most concrete evidence that the war is not over. They are not home, so the President has not yet kept his election promises. Nixon's grip on the prisoner issue, and on the prisoner families, has weakened, as the doves are now maneuvering around the Hanoi Hilton for leverage. If it is not clear whether the prisoners themselves are hawks or doves—whether they are cheering the air strikes, or, as Colonel Edison Miller is reported to be doing, reading the Pentagon Papers—it is equally unclear

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

which side they are helping in domestic politics.

The Common Solution

Frank Mankiewicz deals very smoothly with crowds, so he blanched only slightly and slid to the next question when he was attacked at the Friday night opening session. John B. Coker said that Mankiewicz's boss, George McGovern, is "a traitor to his country" because of his hypercritical statements about the President in time of war. A stern-looking, elderly man from a factory town in New Jersey, Mr. Coker arched his back several times during the convention in irritation over critics of the flag. When one caucus proclaimed itself a planning group only for non-supporters of the President, his neck veins flared and he vowed to "hold my ground until you throw me out bodily. My son's been a POW nearly six years, and I've got as much right to be here as you do." Rolling their eyes in resignation, the dovish POW relatives confessed that Coker was too much to handle.

But despite his reputation for two-fisted, snorting patriotism, John Coker's prescriptions for ending the war sounded almost exactly like those of George McGovern, if you could get him and his wife off in a quiet corner for a talk. "I think the President should say that we will withdraw and stop bombing if the North Vietnamese will show that they will give the POWs back and account for the missing," he said. "We should offer to get out totally and for good. I have never felt we basically belonged there."

High strategy was soon overwhelmed by more immediate family concerns. "My son was just 23 when he was shot down," said Mrs. Coker, "and all he ever wanted to do was be an officer in the U. S. Navy. He wrote us before getting captured that he found the war dirty, but that it was his duty. He was greatly concerned that the bombing be accurate, because he didn't want to kill people. I can tell you that. He followed orders mainly, and was a great one for believing in discipline, but he wanted that bombing to be accurate. . . ."

"I brought up five sons for Vietnam," she went on. "I believed, and was proud to send them. But if we were misled, God help the men who did it. . . . If the President has not gotten us out by the election, I'll vote for anyone else. My grandson's 15, and I don't want him to go."

The Cokers were fairly representative of a broad consensus among the POW-MIA families that the solution to the war lies somewhere around total U. S. withdrawal in exchange for the prisoners. This consensus ran underground like a vein of solid ore, usually obscured by the antagonisms and political differences that have grown up during the war's long history. The existence of this common solution in such dissimilar families seemed startling, even though both George McGovern for the doves and Richard Nixon for the hawks are hovering around it, the extremes closing in. Nixon claims to have offered the common solution to Hanoi in May, 1971, and Dolf Droge spent a healthy portion of Saturday night trying to show that the North Vietnamese will not accept a simple, total withdrawal in exchange for the prisoners. (*The New York Times* of February 6, 1972, quotes Xuan Thuy as saying, "Conditions are no longer favorable for ending the war by means of a complete military withdrawal alone.") The major difference between the two candidates is that Nixon apparently plans to keep bombing until Hanoi moves a little bit this way and jingles the keys to the POW cells, while McGovern proposes to fulfill the American part of the bargain first and then call for the prisoners.

Nixon Watch

Why then, if there is such convergence on withdrawal as the path out of the war and out of the French prisons, did the POW-MIA families go through all the upheaval and turmoil

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

The Washington Monthly

SHORT COURSE in AMERICAN POLITICS

for only $3.00

Sam Brown on "The Politics of Peace." "A fascinating critique"— The New York Times. ". . .absolute candor. . .deserves to be read in full and pondered by anyone concerned with public affairs."—David S. Broder. (50 cents ordered separately—A)

Christopher Pyle's "The Army Watches Civilian Politics" and "The Army Covers Up." The articles that won The Washington Monthly the 1971 George Polk Award for Outstanding Magazine Reporting. ($1.00 ordered separately—B)

"The Ritual of Wiggle." James Boyd's scathingly funny assessment of the state of public morality in America features, among others, Adam Clayton Powell and Edward M. Kennedy. (50 cents ordered separately—C)

"Why We Went to the Moon—From the Bay of Pigs to the Sea of Tranquility." It's the same reason we went to Vietnam. Three reporters from the London Sunday Times tell a fascinating story that was bungled by American journalists. ($1.00 ordered separately—D)

"The Prince and His Courtiers: at the White House, the Kremlin, and the Reichschancellery." Russell Baker and Charles Peters find similarities that are amusing but not comforting. (50 cents ordered separately—E)

The Washington Monthly
1150 Connecticut Ave., N.W., Washington, D.C. 20036

Please send me the **"Short Course in American Politics"** for $3.00 or the following articles (circle choice): A B C D E I enclose $

name_____
address_____
city_____ state_____ Zip_____

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

trying to decide what to do? I think they ran up against a number of misgivings about whether withdrawal will work, and whether they can live with it if it does. These doubts made their acceptance of the common solution very volatile, as one scratch beneath the surface of the rational agreement could send the discussion back to the raucous blows of a 1966 debate. Since the doves I respected most shared these doubts, I took them as a sign that the end of the war might not bring the anticipated feeling of sheer moral release.

For many doves, the obvious problem with the common solution is that the President seems so far away from it—offering to withdraw and yet keeping his position hazy enough to have one foot in the original purposes of the war. Dovish families worried that President Nixon might be close enough to the common solution to win the election, but far enough from it personally to continue bombing afterward—to continue the hostilities that keep the prisoners in Hanoi. They don't want to risk the election at all, with the long, painful slide toward 1976, and so they have pushed the President desperately to clarify his position. But because they want Nixon himself to end the war before November, many of them are afraid to oppose him outright. Ironically, some of them applauded the blockade, announced the day after the convention ended. "I've felt hopeful so many times before," said one dovish wife, "but never as hopeful as now. I mean he's softened his terms. He's moved closer to what they might accept. And he's committed himself to decisive action to end the war, so he can't just drift along, which is what always scares me. It seems to me that the only decisive action he can really take is to move closer to getting out."

Only those who believe that Nixon is absolutely incapable of ending the war focus exclusively on electing a Democrat like McGovern. These people, representatives of the peace movement in the League, often seemed rakishly impolitic and out of touch at the meeting, as when Sheila Cronin, a POW sister and active McGovern worker, lectured the audience: "If you persist in supporting the President, you must accept the sad fact that you, yes you, are as responsible for the deaths of your men as their captors." An interesting point for classroom discussion, perhaps, but such themes sent the families up the wall repeatedly.

Most of the POW relatives believed Nixon is perfectly able to end the war if he really needs to—that he could, for example, announce in August or September how diplomatic sources indicated his "decisive" blockade would force Hanoi off their line that withdrawal is not enough. He could add that the success of Vietnamization enabled the U. S. to offer the North Vietnamese total American withdrawal in exchange for the prisoners. His "last step for peace" would be to stop the bombing while North Vietnam decided whether to accept the common solution. By offering pure peace terms while touting his blockade like a hawk, Nixon might have the North Vietnamese and the Democrats checkmated on the war. Most of the non-Nixon supporters in the League would like to see that happen on such terms.

Two Strange Exiles

Although most of the families would, on balance, accept a successful withdrawal in exchange for the prisoners, many were still shaken by being brought face to face with assessing the final sacrifices of the war—weighing them against peace provisions that show nothing but withdrawal for all the deaths and all the missing years in Hanoi.

There is still great resistance to the common solution in President Nixon and others, who feel strongly that we cannot end the war on terms that do not honor the sacrifices of the POWs and of those who served and died. Similarly, the President says we can-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

not, until the war is ended, grant amnesty to those who fled the country rather than serve, since to do so would also be unfair to the dead. So, ironically, both the POWs and the draft resisters in Canada and Sweden remain exiles because of the same ideas—that there is such a thing as fairness to the dead instead of to the living, that sacrifices can attain honor after they are made, that a war can be made honorable in the absence of strong national belief in it. After building a country by taking in political exiles from all over the globe, we have sent the first batch of our own people abroad over Vietnam—a troupe of its supporters and a troupe of its opponents—and they will stay exiles while we fight to make the war honorable. Even when most people now feel that Vietnam was not worth the sacrifice of one life, we feel driven to honor the dreadful number of exiles by adding to that number. This will seemingly go on until we can live with the war as it has been—something which has had both ideals and support at times, but which most people would like not to have started and which some have found grotesque.

"Sure the issue of sacrifices is hard," said Jane Denton, whose husband is entering his eighth year in Hanoi. "Nothing about this is easy. We just did what we were called upon to do, and I believed it was a noble cause for as long as I could. I don't need anybody to tell me what it was all for, because I remember all the feelings we have had. I don't think the sacrifice will bother us that much. Our heart's breaking over this war. How long do you go on killing, trying to justify the suffering of the people who went there before?"

Some League members feared the common solution, thinking we would keep withdrawing down to nothing and then be rebuffed when we asked for the prisoners. "We've got to stop somewhere and tell Hanoi, 'no more withdrawal until you show that we'll get the POWs back,' " said Robert Brudno, a graduate student at Wharton who assumed a role of statesman-analyst. "I don't think simple withdrawal will work. What's going to happen if McGovern says he's going to get out in 39 days, and then the North Vietnamese up the ante for the POWs? He says he will use all means necessary, including military, to get them back, but I find that hard to believe. Would he resume bombing? I think the North Vietnamese will extract every ounce of blood they can from the POWs, and then they'll start rolling out the MIAs. Why should they fight and give up even more lives to take South Vietnam when they have so much leverage over us? McGovern says that they will give them back because it will be in their self-interest, but it's in their interest to get the best possible deal. McGovern's plan to get back the POWs is almost as vague as Nixon's plan to end the war."

Only 1,600 Men

Among the most remarkable of the dove families, there was an anxiety about how we end the war, the morality of our disengagement, that seemed a product of the special, late kind of antiwar sentiment among military people. You have to take notice when a POW wife wants to end the war regardless of the prisoners—when such a woman also worries about taking off in the helicopter when the scared South Vietnamese we have recruited are scrambling to get aboard. She was worried about what we would leave behind, thinking it almost as foolish to count on ending our involvement by getting out of the war as it was to send thousands of military advisors hoping not to get involved.

This old fear of South Vietnamese collapse is a familiar hawk concern that becomes troublesome when you consider the South Vietnamese who would be politically vulnerable because of stands they have taken under U. S. pressure or encouragement. But in a way it is not so much the failures of Vietnamization that make you stop and think as the successes—all the

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

South Vietnamese in the army who have been trained and will fight and pay for it if they lose. Our policy of giving the South Vietnamese "a fighting chance" may then mean that we maximize the number of Vietnamese who will kill each other if we ever stop bombing. With seven years of artillery and 20 million bomb craters, we will have evened up the sides in somebody else's war, and then we will head for the sidelines like the oddsmaker at a cock fight.

North Vietnam will probably win eventually after we leave South Vietnam, and those of us who are veteran doves will whisper a secret cheer. But it should sour in the realization that we have forced commitments and given help to make the future war more bloody. It is much too much an article of faith among doves that the army in the South is a joke, that the war rides wholly on our B-52s, that South Vietnam will fold up of advanced decay as soon as we leave. Doves don't like reading newspaper stories about South Vietnamese military victories now, and such stories will cause a shudder after we have withdrawn. Antiwar people have a need to feel that Hanoi will win easily when we leave (which is why they won't need the POWs as hostages), and that the North Vietnamese cause is basically a just one.

Looking ahead to the time when the U. S. is out of Indochina, POW doves doubt both these feelings. They make you think that it has always been the American presence in Vietnam that has defined the war for most doves (and to some extent for the Vietnamese), and that it will be hard to know what to think of the war in Vietnam after we have left. The war will return to the morass it was before the artillery and the draft calls, the defiant and mechanical American war, turned the doubts about Vietnam into a screaming madness. While we are still killing there, withdrawal looks white as snow. Yet I think some of the POW families have a premonition that when we take this best of courses, we will find it hard to live with what we left. We will go back to the war's beginning, to North Vietnam's war of revolutionary national unity. (The idea of national unity actually has little or no inherent ethical appeal—either for Richard Nixon, Abe Lincoln, or for the North Vietnamese. In the abstract, you can make a pretty good case for honest secessionism, as in Biafra or Bangladesh.)

When the POW families look ahead, past the 300 sorties that now spill death every day, they do take you back to the war's beginning—to about 1964, with the clock running backwards. All the confusion of the early days bubbles up. They feverishly want the common solution to work—the war to end and the men to come home—and yet there is still something sour about it to them. They are wound tight around the prospect of withdrawal, dying for it and hating it. The little explosions of debate during the League meeting were emotional rather than logical, but the feelings are still there.

Meanwhile, the POW families are denied the partial joy of having the war end and the men return, and they are caught in a political cross fire between the hawks and doves. "We are the most used group of people in the country," lamented one wife. "Our husbands were used to fight the war, and we have been used as a reason to keep fighting. Now we are being used as a reason to get out of the war, but the men are still there." The hawks have used the POWs by caring about them while acting against their interests. The doves have acted in their interests while generally not caring about them. In the midst of all this pain and paradox, you can allow the POW families a little self pity. And you can only marvel at those who manage to look past their own husbands and sons to search for answers to the larger issues of Vietnam. "After all," said a wife, "the POWs are only 1,600 men, and this is a big, horrible war."■

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

MEMO of the Month

Excerpt from Minutes of Proceedings
Board of Higher Education Meeting
February 28, 1972

CLARIFICATION – AFFIRMATIVE ACTION POLICY OF THE BOARD OF HIGHER EDUCATION: Upon motion duly made, seconded and carried, the Board endorsed the following clarification made by the Chancellor of the Board's Affirmative Action Policy approved November 22, 1971, Cal. No. 9:

There has been some misunderstanding of the intent and purpose of the recent Board of Higher Education action approving the Affirmative Action Report prepared pursuant to federal Executive Order 11246 and Executive Order 11375.

As you recall, the report went through several revisions and the final official document was the one approved by the Board of Higher Education on November 22. Throughout the revision process it was the specific objective of the Board, the Affirmative Action Committee, and the University administration to develop a policy statement that would meet the criteria of the federal executive orders but would not be erroneously interpreted to mean that the University was attempting to establish an employment quota system based upon race, religion, gender or ethnic origin. The document approved on November 22 was felt to accurately reflect that intent.

Our affirmative action policy requires the colleges and the central administration of the University to develop affirmative action plans that would overcome the causes as well as the conditions of de facto discrimination in employment against women and minorities. This does not mean that the plans or their implementation require preferential treatment in recruitment, hiring, or promotion on the basis of criteria other than merit. It is our overall personnel policy, of which affirmative action is an important component, that the choice among candidates for hiring or promotion is to be that candidate demonstrating the maximum potential for meeting the job's requirements. Employment selection is to be based primarily upon vocational or professional competence within the framework of those constraints set by civil service law, the Board's bylaws and those professional standards duly established by constituent faculty.

It is the Board's feeling and my own personal conviction that this policy will enhance rather than impair our ability to eliminate conditions of de facto discrimination where they now exist within CUNY. Implementation of this affirmative action policy will require serious and sustained effort to reach and convince members of all groups which are presently the victims of de facto discrimination that this University is determined to achieve a genuine and meaningful policy of equal employment opportunity.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

The Brookings Budget: One Schultz Is Like Another (e)

by John Rothchild and Charles Peters

As Congress sinks into the budget, it has a harder and harder time reaching up to divide the pie. There is little choice but to follow the ruts left over from last year's cut, which are the same ones from the year before that, only they get a little deeper each time. Until recently, there haven't been any other $200-billion pies around to compare with the one we are stuck with, but several groups are now in the business of dreaming up counterbudgets and other works of economic fantasy in an effort to find a way to reform the real one.

**Setting National Priorities: The 1973 Budget.* Charles L. Schultze, Edward R. Fried, Alice M. Rivlin, Nancy H. Teeters. Brookings Institution, $3.50.

Charles Peters and John Rothchild are editors of *The Washington Monthly*.

The most prominent of the counterbudget attempts has come from the Brookings Institution.* Brookings has certain advantages over other research organizations—it enjoys the influence of a shadow Cabinet without the indignity of Senate confirmations, the respect of a university without the bother of students, and the prestige of foundation money without the usual popular indifference to projects financed by it. Any mention of Brookings in the press is almost always preceded by adjectives like "staunchly nonpartisan," or "highly regarded," or as the Boston *Globe* put it, "that fortress of dispassion and bastion of non-ideology." Brookings works hard to maintain this reputation, which makes projects like the alternative budget, first published two years ago, more influential and effective.

This year's installment—*Setting*

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

National Priorities: The 1973 Budget has generated considerably more interest and furor than last year's, primarily because it was published at the same time people were trying to figure out what was wrong with McGovern's economic proposals without the vaguest notion of how to do it. The Brookings budget provided a point of comparison, and it made the front pages of *The New York Times*, *The Washington Post*, the editorial pages of dozens of newspapers, and even warranted an Administration counterattack. In all the articles and editorials on the Brookings substitute budget, the only word of doubt about the seemingly unimpeachable projections from Brookings came from John Ehrlichman of the White House staff.

The Administration differed with the pessimistic Brookings conclusions about the regular budget: that the numbers don't add up, that the great peace dividend supposedly awaiting the end of Vietnam will not exist, and that even without any new programs, there will have to be a tax increase. But the gloomiest and most influential sections of the study are those in which the authors enter their own budgetary fantasy, when Brookings starts moving around the slices of pie presumably freed from the influences of Dita Beard, Lockheed lobbyists, oil-depletion people and warring agencies. The surprise is that the optional budget that emerges from the fortress of dispassion turns out about the same as Nixon's. One is left with the impression that the nation's budgetary problems are not so much political as they are fatal, and that even when intelligent outsiders are freed of all the conflicts of interest and compromises, they still can't find

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

a way to redivide the budget to finance major new programs, or even to keep the old ones in the black, without a tax increase.

On the basis of this conclusion, the press took the Brookings pie and threw it at George McGovern, with all his easy talk about reducing defense spending and using the extra money for social improvements. Brookings' study proved that such a scheme would never work, and it is a tribute to Brookings' reputation that only McGovern's figures, and not their own, were ever questioned, (perhaps because McGovern didn't have any figures). "A long analysis of the 'options' available for possible reduction of defense spending does not change the general [Brookings] conclusion," *The New York Times* lamented. A *Times* sidebar story on this "brilliant, book-length analysis" concluded that "the authors are at their most emphatic when they categorize. . . nonsolutions," meaning nonsolutions like saving money through defense cuts.

The reader expects that the Brookings people have considered the widest possible range of options, because they start their budget from scratch and promise a review not only of the numbers, but also of the thinking behind them. "A reasoned decision," Brookings says, "as to how much should be spent cannot be made until the alternative policies available have been examined carefully and a judgment has been made about their effectiveness and cost. The bulk of this book is devoted to examining some of the basic policy issues."

The policy issues, however, are quickly lost to incrementalism, or a shrinking of the imagination to the point where it is no longer possible to conceive of any change that deviates more than approximately 10 per cent from what already exists. Incrementalism is normally associated with government agencies, politics, and other places of pragmatic compromise lumped together as the real world. It is surprising to find the same symptoms in the fortress of dispassion, which exists precisely because it is free to consider the options and ideas that the government cannot bring itself to imagine. But the optional defense budgets that finally filter down through the Brookings fantasy are so close to present spending levels that the very competent authors seem almost like prisoners of the official budget. "The range of uncertainty within which reasonable people can and do disagree as to what is needed to satisfy the same defense objectives is probably on the order of $20 billion," the report says. Reasonable people, therefore, could not deviate plus or minus $10 billion from the

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Pentagon budget we have now, and no discussion at any point in the study deals with any other objectives.

So the broad policy questions which Brookings said it would ask are abandoned because it is not reasonable to consider them, and by page 64, the authors themselves are admitting how limited a set of alternative budgets they are presenting in the guise of a full review. "Differences among the. . . options stem not from differing views of the contingencies to be met, but from differing interpretations of the military capabilities needed to meet them," the report says. It is worth a closer look at these Brookings alternate military budgets, both because they take up the bulk of the report, and because they are the basis for the contention that cutting back on defense spending will not finance any buttery or populist initiatives.

Fat Side of the Limb

Brookings starts out by dividing up military spending into various categories (such as ground forces and strategic forces) and then lays out several possible budgets for each. In the case of ground forces, six alternatives are presented. These range from a budget that is higher than the current one down to two low-cost options. The difference between what the Nixon Administration plans to spend on troops ($19.9 billion) and the most radical reduction that Brookings can bring itself to consider, is only $2.3 billion. This reduction would deactivate only three of the 16 Army and Marine Corps divisions, and furthermore, this bargain-basement option, Brookings explains, would easily provide enough manpower to fight one-and-a-half wars, which is the Nixon policy. The largest cutback in ground troops that reasonable people can entertain, therefore, is the same number that would satisfy all the policy requirements of the Nixon government.

In other areas of the budget, Brookings does develop some alternatives that violate the incrementalists' creed, but even then it stays well on the fat side of the limb. For instance, many people are presenting reasonable arguments that aircraft carriers are useless, yet Brookings cannot entertain the abolition of anything as a possibility. Its wildest notion is the reduction of the fleet from 17 to 9 carriers. The oil depletion allowance is under attack from all quarters, yet the farthest Brookings will go is to cut the allowance in half. The same goes for other subsidies and tax breaks examined in the report.

Things get even more reasonable as

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

the study approaches the last chapter. Even the meager defense alternatives presented in the early section of the books are abandoned in the three summary composite budgets, which all rely on the triad strategic force. The triad force includes land-based missiles, submarine-based missiles, and bombers, each individually capable of obliterating the Soviet Union. The cheapest and sparsest overkill alternative considered in any of the fantasy budgets, therefore, includes MIRV Minuteman III, a complete Poseidon system, an accelerated development of the new Undersea Long Range Missile System (ULMS), a moderate B-1 schedule, and the keeping of the newer of the B-52s. In short, Brookings leaves each service with the toys to play the strategic game independently. Anything less would be disastrous, considering the contingencies to be met, especially when one of the contingencies is keeping all branches of the military happy.

And finally, when we come to the part of the report where the entire defense section is incorporated into the total budget, even the lower of the three composite spending levels discussed above is dropped out. This lower expenditure alone would represent a savings of $13-14 billion a year by 1977, as compared to the present budget. One could run quite a few programs for $13 billion.

Dorothy Parker's Budget

One might conclude two things from this—one is that the present budget is already so rational, so good, that a bunch of dispassionate scholars sitting in a think tank cannot really conceive of any way to improve it. That is possible, but unlikely. The other is that Brookings is interested in something besides exploring alternatives or creating utopias of budgetary rationality. There are hints of this. Kermit Gordon, who runs the place, and Charles Schultze, one of the authors of the study, are old budget men themselves. The second possibility is that Brookings would really like to see their counterbudget passed by Congress and signed by the President.

Both conclusions are possible, because Brookings suffers an acute schizophrenia. In the press, it would like to be known as iconoclastic, sophisticated, acidic, like Dorothy Parker sitting at the Algonquin. In the Congress, it would like to be known as Willie Stark in the cloakroom —shrewd, hard-bargaining, able to accept the grim realities. *Setting National Priorities* starts out like Dorothy Parker and ends up like Willie Stark, and one can see the Brookings people writing it, starting out with the broadside attack and then closing in on the conclusions, wondering if you cut out all the aircraft carriers what would John Stennis say, wondering what reforms you might slip past Wilbur Mills or Warren Magnuson this year. Brookings feels most comfortable in the middle—if there is anything it likes worse than being called an ivory tower, it is being called a backscratcher. Like George Ball on Vietnam, Brookings would like to disagree, but still be in the room.

The problem with all this is that from the outside, Brookings is looked on as perhaps the last of the respectable gadflies, the last non-partisan organization to which people can turn for intelligent advice. The image is largely carried on by newspapers who don't see that there are other reasons for gadflies to be wishy-washy than the fact that they are on the take. Brookings' influence depends on the fact that the press treats it as Dorothy Parker while at the same moment it is thinking like Willie Stark.

To an editorial, the journalists praised Brookings for having the strength of character to accept grim realities and rub people's noses in the economic mud. The trouble was that the mud was created by Brookings and its vanishing alternatives. Since people don't generally enjoy hearing bad news, there must be some other reason why they were so grateful to Brookings for its ethical gloom. Part

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

of the reason may be that underneath all the then-disturbing statistics, there is something soothing and comforting about the idea that the federal budget is so well designed that rational, brilliant people, left to their imaginations, can't come up with anything different, that our priorities are so good that there isn't any way to switch them around.

A Brookings suggestion to cut $40 billion from the defense budget would have implied that the current budget was crazy. This, in turn, might have generated some questioning of Brookings' well-established rationality. As long as Brookings tells us we are basically doing the right thing, we will continue to believe, as columnist Bruce Biosatt does: "The highly respected Brookings Institution is treating the issue with the careful balance its research skills allow."

Aside from the hidden pleasantry in Brookings' budget, it is also a high-powered excuse for not doing anything. If poor people are starving because the federal money is not being well spent, then we will have to fight to change things. But if the reason has to do with hopeless inevitability as perceived by a prestigious institution, then we really have no choice and might as well forget it. The latter option is far more comfortable. The Great Society, as Brookings sees it, is dead, not only because the money was wasted and bungled, but because there was never enough to go around anyway.

The Vanishing Gadfly

Thus, reading the Brookings budget makes one relax lower into the easy chair. The Albany *Knickerbocker News*, for instance, concludes: "Cutting back on military expenditures and subsidy programs alone would not bring a balance to the books. Neither would the closing of tax loopholes, although that would help substantially." *The New York Times*, in an editorial commenting on the report, is already limiting its vision and pinching pennies for this period of austerity. "If the country's prospective resources for social projects are already overcommitted, it would seem to make sense for Congress to focus on changes aimed at improving the chief present weakness of the American health system, at relatively moderate cost." In other words, forget the sweeping changes and concentrate on a little more here, a little less there. That is all there is to get.

Editorials like this prove that the Brookings report is much more than a respected exercise. It can directly affect how much is done to change federal spending by convincing people like *New York Times* editorial writers that very little can be done in the coming decade of economic crisis. This is where incrementalism bites its tail—because Brookings helps make us believe that only small changes are possible, that is all we demand. Ultimately, we get less.

The fault is not entirely Brookings', but is also in the way the report was presented by the press, which no doubt only had time to read the summary in time for the afternoon deadline. Sprinkled through the book are disclaimers that the Brookings alternatives are not the only ones that exist, but these suggestions are lost in the rush of numbers and in the paragraphs about reasonable men.

This whole budget exercise makes one wonder about the real function of places like Brookings. Ostensibly, there is a role for the last of the non-partisan gadflies, but the appreciation heaped upon Brookings makes one doubt the strength of the sting. More likely, this shadow Cabinet does to the imagination what the real Cabinet does to the pocketbook, and each supports the other. When the collective imagination of the geniuses in what is perhaps the last American ivory tower untouched by partisanship comes up with nearly the identical dream as Richard Nixon, the Treasury, and the Office of Management and Budget, then the country is in trouble.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

POLITICAL BOOK NOTES

Public affairs books to be published in August.

Ashes of Victory: World War II and Its Aftermath. Quincy Howe. Simon & Schuster, $12.50.

Black Power and the Garvey Movement. Theodore G. Vincent. Ramparts, $5.95.

Black Religion and Black Radicalism. Gayraud S. Wilmore. Doubleday, $7.95.

The Bloods: The Black Soldier from Vietnam to America. Wallace Terry. Viking, $8.95.

The Broken Rebel: A Study in Culture, Politics, and Authoritarian Character. Rupert Wilkinson. Harper, $12.50.

Bureaucracy and Foreign Policy. Francis E. Rourke. Johns Hopkins, $6, $2.50.

Busing and Backlash: White Against White in an Urban School District. Lillian Rubin. Univ. of California, $7.95.

Company Man: A Novel of a CIA Mercenary. Joe Maggio. Putnam, $6.95.

The Disenchanted Isles: The Story of the Second Revolution in Hawaii. Theon Wright. Dial, $7.95.

The Domination of Nature. William Leiss. Braziller, $6.95.

Don't Blame the People: How the News Media Use Bias, Distortion and Censorship to Manipulate Public Opinion. Robert Cirino. Random House, $8.95., $2.45. A liberal answer to Spiro Agnew on the biases of the media.

Education and the Rise of the Corporate State. Joel H. Spring. Beacon, $7.95.

The Effete Conspiracy: And Other Crimes by the Press. Ben H. Bagdikian. Harper & Row, $6.95.

The Eloquence of Protest: Voices of the 70's. Harrison Salisbury, ed. Houghton Mifflin, $7.95, $3.95. In an anthology "dedicated to the agony of the world," the associate editor of *The New York Times* assembles a strange choir of protesters from the last decade: Daniel Berrigan, a Greek political prisoner, Spiro Agnew on Attica, George Jackson, a Haitian exile, Bernadine Dohrn for the Weathermen underground, Max Frankel on the trials of the press, Yevtushenko on Che Guevara, and so on. Cumulatively, the editor brings forth a most distinguished cry of despair.

Ethics and World Politics: Four Perspectives. Ernest W. Lefever, ed. Johns Hopkins, $6, $2.50.

Farewell to the South. Robert Coles. Atlantic-Little, Brown, $8.50. A stale collection of previously published essays which recount this eminent psychologist's discovery of the South. Easy to read.

Fire in the Lake: The Vietnamese and the Americans in Vietnam. Frances FitzGerald. Atlantic-Little, Brown, $10.

From the Diary of a Counter Revolutionary. Pavel Kohout. McGraw-Hill $7.95. Well-written, subjective selections from the diary of a Czech writer. The passages are interwoven bits from three periods in his life: the hopeful times of 1948, when the young party member joins the crusade to build communism; the renaissance in 1968, when Alexander Dubcek begins his reform movement; and the August, 1968, Soviet occupation.

The Garden of Earth: The Case for Ecological Morality. Bruce Allsopp. Morrow, $5.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Government Anarchy and the Pogonogo Alternative. Theodore Becker. Stein & Day, $6.95.

The Intellectuals and the Powers and Other Essays. Edward Shils. Univ. of Chicago, $12.50.

Kennedyism: The Politics of Expectation. Henry Fairlies. Doubleday, $8.95.

Law and Order in Grade 6-E: A Story of Chaos and Innovation in a Ghetto School. Kim Marshall. Little, Brown, $7.95.

Ling: The Rise, Fall and Return of a Texas Titan. Stanley H. Brown. Atheneum, $10. The Administration said it would never go over the head of Richard McLaren of the Justice Department's Antitrust Division to settle ITT-type suits. This book describes how they handled a suit against Ling-Temco-Vought, a company with considerably less influence than ITT:

> Ling began moving on his own toward a settlement of the lawsuit. His curious personal war with Assistant Attorney General McLaren made a direct approach virtually useless, so Ling sought instead to make contact through Attorney General Mitchell. That method worked. Mitchell seemed happy at the prospect of an escape from the suit for his people, so he passed word down that LTV wanted to settle. Ling also got a message from Mitchell: "Throw the bureaucrats a bone."

Makers of Modern Thought. The editors of *Horizon*. American Heritage, $15.

The Making of Black Revolutionaries: A Personal Account. James Forman. Macmillan, $12.50. A long, powerfully written book on the history of Forman's involvement in the black movement. Slips into cliches often. Best on the SNCC period. Forman convinces you of everything except that he is a revolutionary.

Mao and China: Revolution to Revolution. Stanley Karnow. Viking, $12.95.

The Mature Society. Dennis Gabor. Praeger, $7.50.

The Middle East: Issues and Alternatives. Walter Isard and Julian Wolpert, eds. Schenkman, $7.95.

The Mountain States of America: People, Politics and Power in the Eight Rocky Mountain States. Neal R. Pierce. Norton, $9.95.

McGovern: The Man and His Beliefs. Shirley MacLaine, ed. Norton, $5.95.

The New Federalism. Michael D. Reagan. Oxford, $5.95. Dispensable, and dull.

Nixon and the Environment. James Rathlesberger. Village Voice/Random House, $2.45.

On Learning and Social Change. Michael Rossman. Random House, $10, $2.45.

OSS: The Secret History of America's First Central Intelligence Agency. R. Harris Smith. Univ. of California, $10.95.

The Pacific States of America: People, Politics and Power in the Five Pacific Basin States. Neal R. Pierce. Norton, $9.95.

Participatory Democracy. Daniel C. Kramer. Schenkman, $7.95.

The Pentagon Papers: Critical Essays and an Index to Volumes I-IV. The Gravel Edition. Noam Chomsky and Howard Zinn, eds. Beacon, $12.50, $5.

The Police and the Community. Robert F. Steadman, ed. Johns Hopkins, $6, $2.25.

Politics, Science, and Dread Disease: A Short History of United States Medical Research Policy. Stephen P. Strickland. Harvard, $12.

Pot Shots: America's Foremost Dope Lawyer Exposes Civil Wrongs That Threaten Civil Rights. Michael Stepanian. Delacorte, $5.95.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

P.O.W.: Two Years with the Viet Cong. George E. Smith. Ramparts, $5.95. Curiosity about the Viet Cong will sell this book, but its most memorable passages deal with what it was like before and after capture, when Smith lived with the strange Americans. The Viet Cong treated him well enough, and impressed him enough, that at a press conference after his release, Smith told a reporter he was joining the peace movement.

The Prison of Unemployment: Manpower Programs for Offenders. Robert Taggart III. Johns Hopkins, $6, $2.50.

Race, Class and Political Consciousness. John Leggett. Schenkman, $8.95, $3.95.

Rancho Paradise. John Deck. Harcourt, Brace, Jovanovich. $8.50.

Shadow on the Alamo: New Heroes Fight Old Corruption in Texas Politics. Harvey Katz. Doubleday, $6.95. Portions of this book were excerpted in the July issue of *The Washington Monthly*.

Some Presidents: Wilson to Nixon. William Appleman Williams. New York Review/Random House, $2.45.

The Strange Case of Richard Milhouse Nixon. Jerry Voorhis. Paul S. Eriksson, $8.95. This book could have been a camp political classic, but it comes off as an adequate broadside against Nixon's record as President. Only the chapter on his agricultural policy sticks out as original. There are some good quotes, such as one from Vice President Nixon in the 1954 campaign: "Ninety-six per cent of the 6,926 Communists, fellow-travelers, sex perverts, people with criminal records, dope addicts, drunks, and other security risks removed under the Eisenhower security program were hired by the Truman Administration."

Systems Analysis in Public Policy, A Critique. Ida R. Hoos. Univ. of California, $10.

This Country Was Ours: A Documentary History of the American Indian. Virgil J. Vogel. Harper & Row, $12.95.

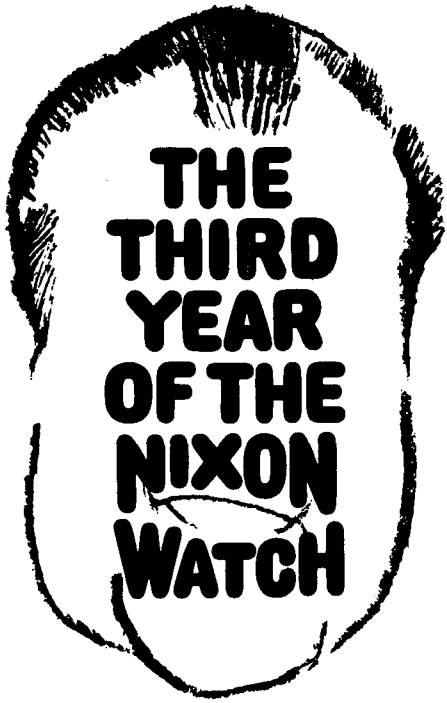
Urban Guerrillas: The War for the Cities. Robert Moss. Coward, McCann & Geoghegan, $6.95.

The Weary and the Wary: U. S. and Japanese Security Policies in Transition. Robert E. Osgood. Johns Hopkins, $5, $2.

Who's Watching the Airways? Philip I. Ryther with Stephen M. Aug. Doubleday, $7.95.

Work and Welfare Go Together. Sar A. Levitan, Martin Rein and David Marwick. Johns Hopkins, $6, $2.50.

Youth in Politics. Sydney Hyman. Basic, $8.50. A lackluster string of first paragraphs of news stories we have already read.



by JOHN OSBORNE
ILLUSTRATIONS BY PAT OLIPHANT

"... in the long tradition of Anglo-American political journalism at its best and most useful."
—*CBS Radio*

"With Jules Witcover's 'The Resurrection of Richard Nixon' and Garry Wills's 'Nixon Agonistes,' Osborne's continuing chronicle of his Nixon Watch is the most perceptive account we have ..."—*Newsweek*

"substantial and enlightening"
—*Chicago Tribune*

"... as more and more power devolves on the office of the presidency, as presidential staff mushrooms, and as 'executive privilege' becomes a battle-cry, the need for this type of reportage not only grows proportionally but becomes a veritable necessity."
—*The Washington Post, Book World*

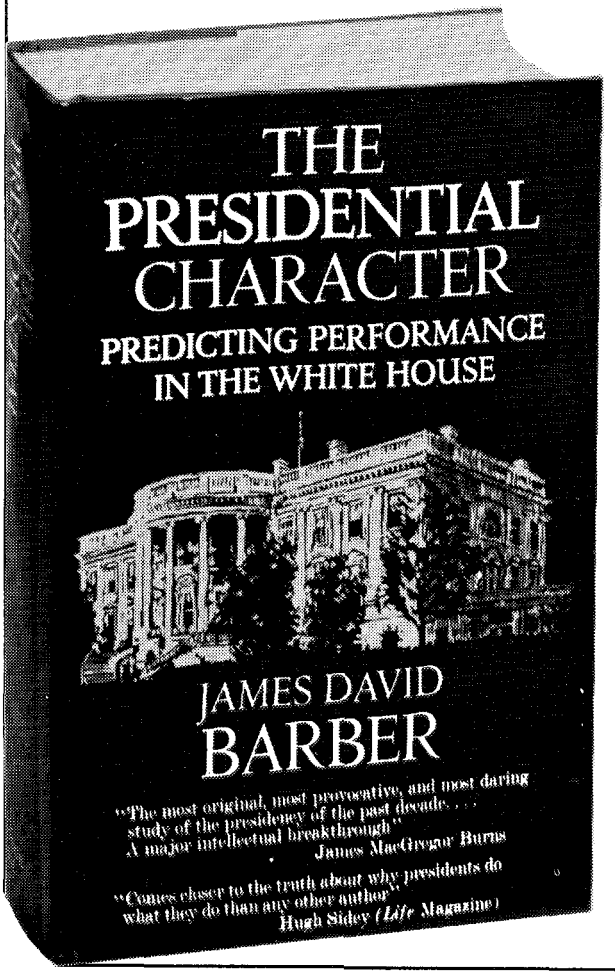
$6.95 at your bookstore

LIVERIGHT
386 Park Ave. South, New York, N.Y. 10016

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

"The most original, most provocative and most daring study of the presidency of the past decade."

—JAMES MacGREGOR BURNS



THE PRESIDENTIAL CHARACTER

Predicting Performance in the White House
by James David Barber

A revolutionary book that probes the characters, styles, and world views of recent American presidents from Taft to Nixon, and examines each in terms of their psychological backgrounds and reaction to various situations.

"Comes closer to the truth about why presidents do what they do than any other author."

—HUGH SIDEY, *Life*

"Provocative and timely."

—*Publishers Weekly*

$10.00

At your bookseller or by mail:
PRENTICE-HALL
Englewood Cliffs, N.J. 07632

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Remember, you ~~can't~~ can fight City Hall.

WINNING ELECTIONS

a handbook in participatory politics

DICK SIMPSON

"As illuminating a nuts-and-bolts description of what is needed to conduct a winning campaign on the community level as any concerned citizen could hope for." —PUBLISHERS' WEEKLY

WINNING ELECTIONS, a brilliant step-by-step guide for Independents anywhere, shares the winning techniques and strategies developed by Independents in tough Chicago campaigns over the last 3 years. One of the few practical handbooks that also provides a thorough analysis of the ideas of participatory politics, WINNING ELECTIONS might be used in training workshops for hundreds of people, or serve the individual reader as a re-introduction to creative political choice. $6.00

Sample campaign materials, graphs, maps, bibl, index.

THE SWALLOW PRESS INC.
1139 S. WABASH AVENUE CHICAGO, ILLINOIS 60605

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED